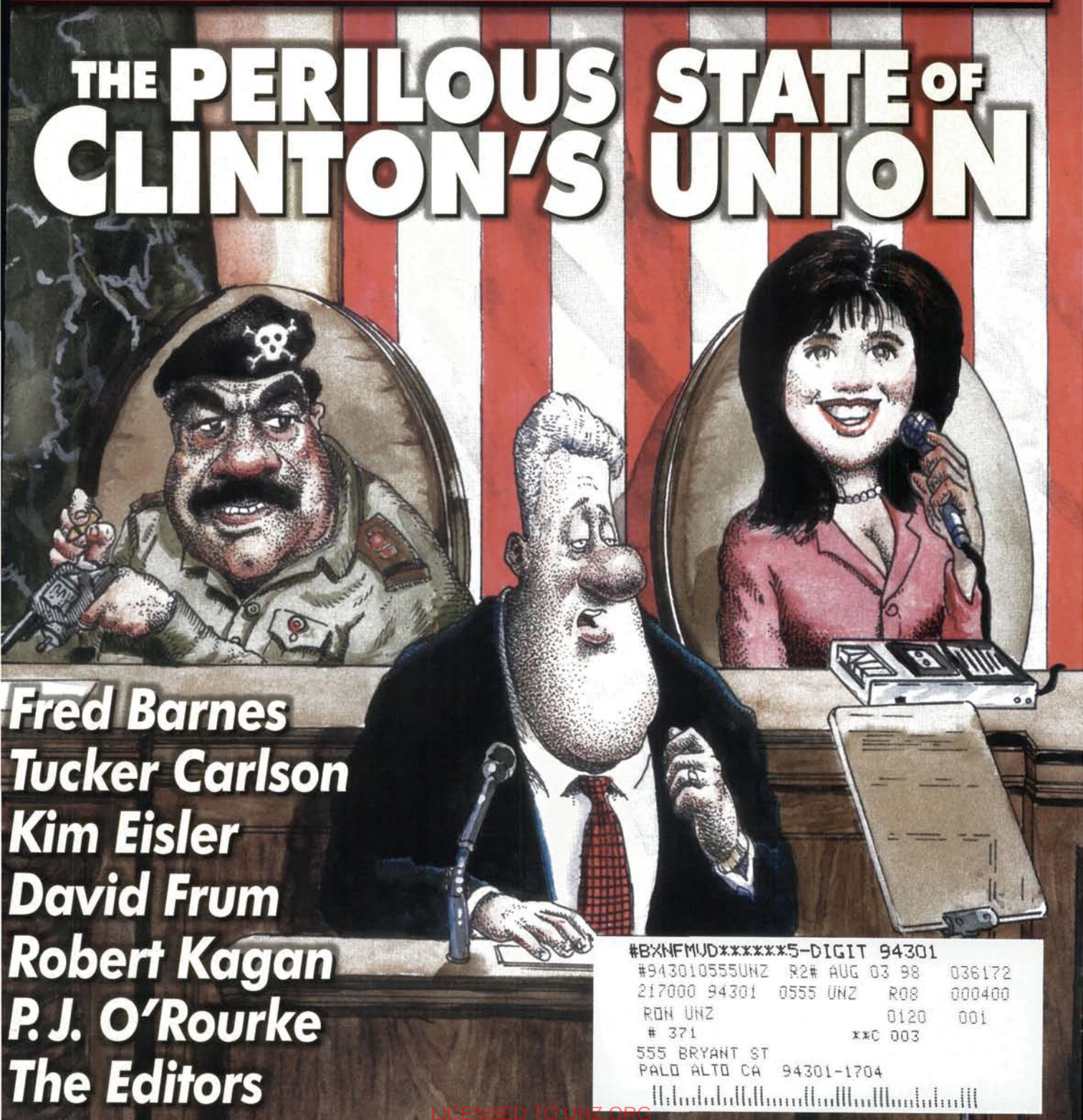
the weekly
Standard

FEBRUARY 2, 1998 $2.95

SPEAKING OF THE DEAD
JOSEPH EPSTEIN

THE PERILOUS STATE OF CLINTON'S UNION



Fred Barnes
Tucker Carlson
Kim Eisler
David Frum
Robert Kagan
P. J. O'Rourke
The Editors

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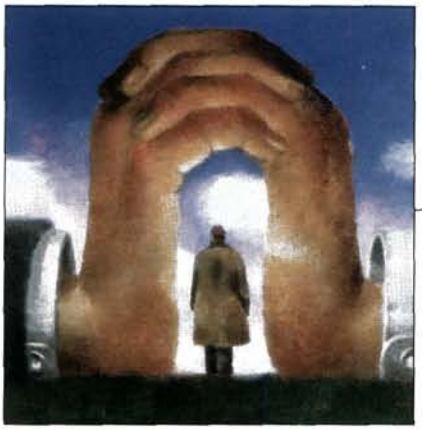
FIXING HEALTH CARE ISN'T EXACTLY BRAIN SURGERY. (IF ONLY IT WERE THAT EASY.)

About the only aspect of the health care debate any two people might agree on is that the system needs work. We'd like to weigh in with a few ideas of our own since we're actually in the position to do something about it. ▪ First off, the paramount focus of health care must be quality. Which is why we're working to enable a level of health care never available under the old fee-for-service system. ▪ We can't do it alone. So we're joining with academic medicine to make the system better. We've pioneered and allocated $15 million to fund the Academic Medicine and Managed Care Forum. An ongoing gathering of our experts, and those from more than 30 leading universities and teaching hospitals. Including Johns Hopkins, Yale, Emory, Baylor, University of Pennsylvania and Stanford. Together, we're seeking new ways to help get patients the health care they need. ▪ Already, we send timely reminders that encourage members to see their doctors for immunizations to prevent illness and screenings that diagnose disease early enough to do something about it. One result has been a significant reduction in late-stage breast cancer. ▪ To better manage chronic diseases, we've created outreach efforts that have reduced asthma emergencies 60%, promoted eyesight-saving laser therapy for diabetics, and improved the quality of life for people with congestive heart failure. ▪ There's more work to be done. And we'll do more than our share of it. Because no matter how complex, it has never been our policy to turn our back on a problem. Whether it's that of a patient, or of an entire health care system.



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the weekly
Standard

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The Audit Bureau Member

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More Loyal Even Than a Dog

If you want a friend in Washington, get a reporter. The *Wall Street Journal*'s Al Hunt, for example, has been smoochingly loyal to Vernon Jordan, a Hunt buddy and also a member of the board of directors of Hunt's employer, Dow Jones. Here's a typical effusion from the silver-maned pundit on ABC's *Nightline*: "I've known Vernon Jordan for almost 20 years. He's a friend. . . . Would he have told [Lewinsky] to commit perjury? I just find that impossible to believe."

The only rival in the unbridled-innocence sweepstakes was *Time* magazine. After the president's deposition by Paula Jones's lawyers, White House flacks were spinning the story that Clinton was so ecstatic with the deposition that he and Hillary decided *not* to go out to dinner that evening. *Time* bought it, hook, line and sinker: "The President felt that the deposition had gone smashingly for him. Describing the mood Saturday night at the White House, one person close to the president said, 'Everyone is going to sleep well tonight.'" Where have all the hard-bitten journalists gone?

Ah, the Good Old Days

There are claims so old, to paraphrase a famous line from the *Partisan Review*'s William Phillips, that one can't remember the answers to them—or recall much beyond the fact that they were demolished a long, long time ago.

Even while the front page of the *New York Times* on Jan. 16 was running the results of a poll showing that the arguments against abortion may have finally begun to reach the American public, the editorial desk of the nation's most prestigious newspaper was ginning up for its coverage of the 25th anniversary of *Roe* v. *Wade*. And its efforts—in celebration of the Supreme Court's decision that has allowed since 1973 at least 36 million acts of what 50 percent of Americans now consider murder—proved much like a visit to the Victorian murderers' display in Madame Tussaud's wax museum: You can't remember much about the figures except that they were bad and were hanged a long time ago.

So Frank Rich in his Jan. 21 column pounced on the old linguistic point that "pro-choice" doesn't mean "pro-abortion"—as though it were 1975 and he imagined that the battle over abortion were going to be solved by a change of vocabulary. The next day, the *Times* ran its own unsigned editorial, reminding its readers of the necessity to educate their girls in the tragic history of those dark days before *Roe* when "women died or were maimed as a result of illegal abortions"—as though it were 1973 and it were still possible to daydream that all legal abortions were going to be perfectly performed in brightly lit university hospitals, instead of by the scum of the medical profession who in fact do perform most abortions and all too frequently botch them.

But the most astonishingly dated performance was the Sunday before, when the *Times*'s Sunday magazine ran as its cover story an essay by Jack Hitt in praise of those courageous doctors who still practice as abortionists. A line like Hitt's "Dr. Alexander Nicholas is an observant Catholic father of three, which is not everybody's idea of an abortion provider" is so far beyond intelligibility, one doesn't know what date to assign it. But the entire article is such a parade of exploded statistics and outdated claims that reading it is like trolling through 25 years of Planned Parenthood press releases. All abortionists are brave heroes of women's rights, all those who are opposed to abortion are terrorists, thousands upon thousands of aborting women died before *Roe* and none has died since, abortion was legal until the Civil War, etc., etc.

Proof that none of this is true is out there, and if the *Times*'s own poll is right, Americans are finally learning it. But not from their paper of record.

What Super Bowl?

Close readers will recall the assertion in last week's Casual by Fred Barnes that the Super Bowl is a conservative event and that "liberals often spend Super Sunday at the movies or browsing at Borders."

Scientific research now confirms Barnes's hypothesis. A Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll of registered voters found that only 48 percent of Democrats are more likely to watch the Super Bowl than the State of the

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Scrapbook

Union address. Among Republicans, 63 percent were more likely to watch the Super Bowl. But these numbers are merely suggestive. Decisive is the confession by the *New Yorker*'s Hendrik Hertzberg, appearing on C-SPAN's *Washington Journal*, that he did not intend to watch the Super Bowl, that none of his friends did either, and that he wasn't even sure what teams were playing in it. Q.E.D.

Pixley Wins Again

Last week's cover piece by Tucker Carlson, "Horror in the Court," told the story of Latrena Pixley, a 24-year-old Washington, D.C., woman who murdered her young daughter six years ago and was recently awarded custody of her 2-year-old son. Laura Blankman, a 27-year-old police trainee who has taken care of the boy during Pixley's incarceration, appealed the custody decision of Judge Michael D. Mason. The judge, in a sealed order, has now ruled that the boy must be returned to Pixley by April 18. The appeal will be heard in March or April.

Repeat Offender

For most Americans, the dramatic drop in the nation's crime rate has been a piece of pure good news. But at the *New York Times*, it has caused deep intellectual puzzlement. After all, if you subscribe to the old-time liberal religion of "root causes," crime rates aren't supposed to go down until poverty and racism are eliminated, and the police have all been taught proper table manners.

No one is more befuddled by the happy turn of events than Fox Butterfield, the veteran *Times* reporter. Last October, The Scrapbook noted Butterfield's alarmingly illogical story: "Crime Keeps on Falling, but Prisons Keep on Filling." In it, Butterfield pointed out that crime rates have been falling since the early '90s. "So why," he asked with a straight face, "is the number of inmates in prisons and jails around the nation still going up?" His answer: Americans just like to lock 'em up and throw away the key. What Butterfield didn't consider, astonishingly, is the possibility that crime might be going down *because* more criminals are being locked up for longer terms.

Butterfield and the *Times* were at it again last week. "Despite a decline in the crime rate over the past five years," he reported breathlessly, "the number of inmates in the nation's jails and prisons rose again in 1997." The accompanying graphic is a minor classic: "The crime rate has gone down," it notes, "but the number of inmates continues to rise." Mind-boggling. And still, the idea that locking 'em up might lower crime rates is not even entertained by Butterfield. As younger Americans of The Scrapbook's acquaintance so eloquently put it: "Duh."

Help Wanted

The Weekly Standard has a full-time position available for an entry-level staff assistant. This is an administrative position working with the business and circulation staff. Please send your résumé to: Business Manager, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036. Or fax us at (202) 293-4901.

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Casual

Sweet Land of Gluttony

Lately I've been reading the new book from the always-discerning journalist Michael Fumento, an essay into the question of why Americans are such fatties. And we are, of course; even our foremost advocate of diet and exercise, Richard Simmons, is a fatty. Fumento's *The Fat of the Land*, published last fall by Viking, is a relatively slender 300 pages, but it contains, pound for pound, more fascinating information than any book I've consumed in the past year.

One section that weighed heavily on my mind was called "Attack of the Giant Killer Food," in which Fumento traced the growth of various common American edibles. Ye old McDonald's hamburger, for instance, started out at 3.6 ounces; then came the Quarter Pounder, at 6 ounces, and now we have the Arch Deluxe at 9. There's even a Double Big Mac that probably tops a half-pound. So, too, the lowly candy bar. The conventional Butterfinger of my youth was 280 calories. Now Butterfinger comes in the "Beast" size: 141 grams, 680 calories. Other fast-food chains are offering burritos that weigh more than three pounds—a clear violation of the ancient maxim: "Never eat anything larger than your own head."

Giantism is the great American curse, afflicting everything from architecture to government, so we shouldn't be surprised that it's pumping up our food as well. Fumento's data struck me with particular force because a new grocery store just opened in my neighborhood—one of those warehouse-sized "club" stores, where a customer buys a membership that gives him the right to get foodstuffs at (so goes the pitch) remarkably low prices. As it happens, I love grocery stores; or, more properly, supermarkets. I love their clean, wide, airy aisles, flanked with glittering rows of peanut butter, pickles, and potato chips. I love the boundless bins spilling over with grapes from California, corn from Florida, and beets from Georgia. Well, not the beets. I hate beets.

But I love even the name, brimming with JFK-era vim and vigor: not just markets, but markets that are *super*. They never fail to impart, for me, a patriotic glow. Walking into one I always recall a college friend who, in the depths of the Cold War, married a woman from Hungary and brought her to live in southern California. On the first night he took her to a Safeway. She was struck dumb, and then burst into tears—happy tears, needless to say. Here, in a quarter acre of retail space, was more toilet paper than in the entire city of Budapest. Until that moment my friend had been a socialist. But he wound up voting for Reagan.

These new warehouses are a different matter, to judge by my neighborhood "Shopper's Club," or whatever it's called. I had expected something down-market, as the advertising boys like to say, but the parking lot was filled with Land Rovers, Jeep Cherokees, Previas—all the favored vehicles of the Nike-wearing yuppie, and all with lots of trunk space. It turns out that the trunk space is absolutely essential.

For the first thing you notice about the Shopper's Club is that almost everything on sale is larger than your own head. You want dill pickles? They got dill pickles: in six-gallon jars—and sweet crinkle cuts and whole kosher and jalapeños and pepper relish sold in the same tonnage. Hot dogs come 24 to a pack, burger meat in loaves of three pounds and up. Toilet paper is sold in a 36-count bundle too big for a man to carry. There are three-pound boxes of Frosted Flakes, and gallon jugs of Hawaiian Punch to wash down the Frosted Flakes. The portions are outlandish, dizzying. Eight pounds of frozen French fries in a single bag! When I came to a four-pound hunk of scrapple, I had to avert my eyes.

The gimmick here derives from the economies of scale: The more pounds you buy, the less you spend per pound. And so Shopper's Club reconciles two seemingly irreconcilable American impulses; the Puritan desire to save a buck justifies the Sybaritic compulsion to consume in mass quantities. This is a kind of capitalist triumph, I guess, but at what cost? The presentation of products, for example, was once one of the glories of the supermarket. But here the goods are shoved out at you on austere steel racks, the ratchets and bolts exposed, the better to convey the sense of no-frills bargain-hunting. Pallets of antifreeze and motor oil teeter next to carton upon carton of Beer Nuts. And after you check out, of course, you bag your own purchases—just as the Pilgrims would have. And then you lug them out yourself to the back of the Land Rover, which takes you home, where you congratulate yourself on your restraint and temperance, as you tear open a three-pound bag of Lay's potato chips. Because nowadays nobody—and I mean nobody, least of all myself—can eat just one.

Andrew Ferguson

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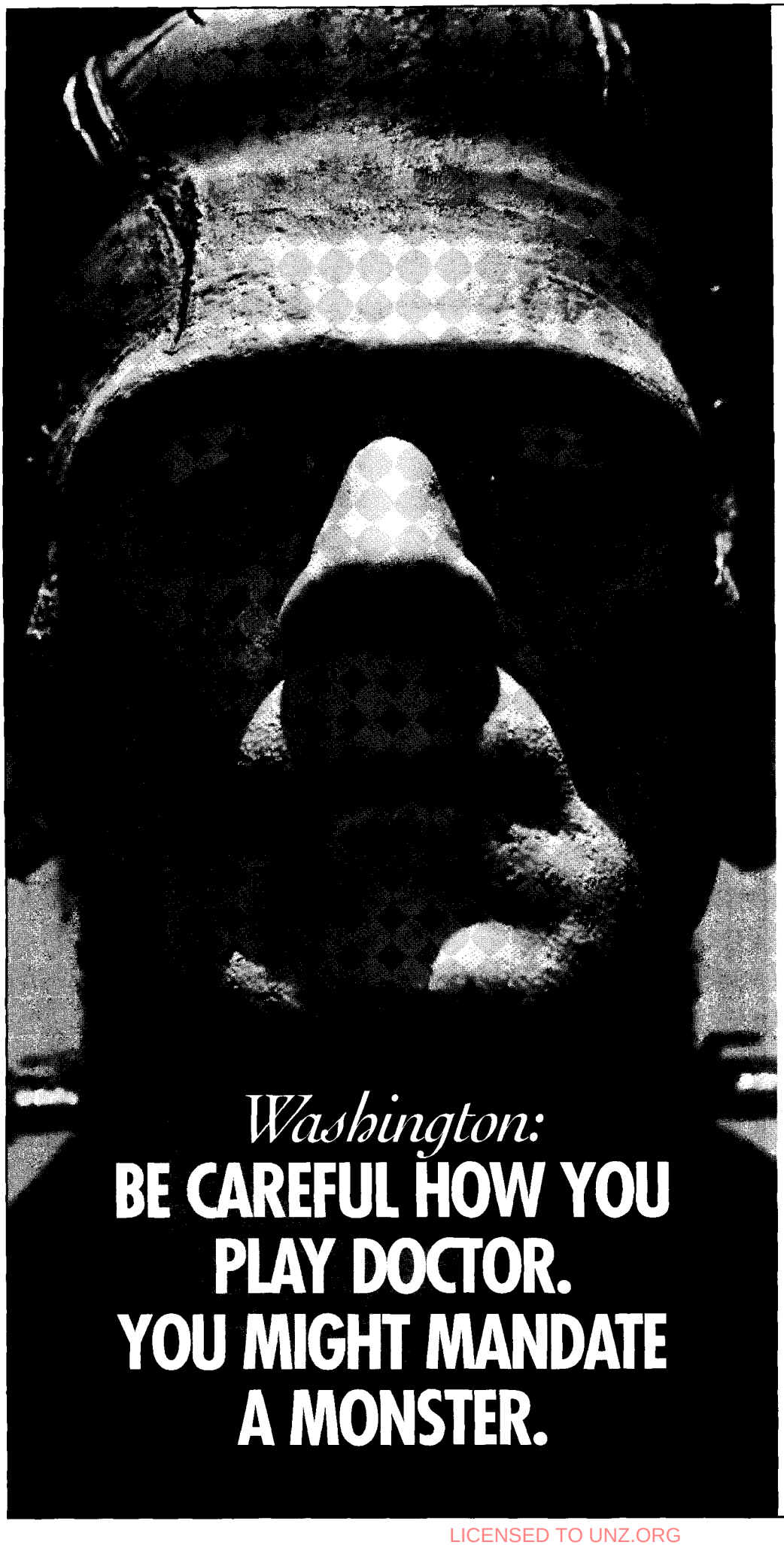

Health care reform has taken on a frightening new look.

The White House and some in Congress are proposing mandates that will drive up costs, forcing millions of Americans to lose their health insurance.

One bill, the Patient Access to Responsible Care Act, would mandate a monstrous bureaucracy with more than 300 new requirements, forcing premiums up an average of 23 percent.

On behalf of 3 million employers and more than 100 million employees and their families, we urge you to oppose health care mandates. Because every one percent increase in costs forces 200,000 to 400,000 Americans to lose their health insurance. **Now that's scary.**

THE HEALTH BENEFITS COALITION

For Affordable Choice & Quality

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The Business Roundtable
National Association of Manufacturers
National Restaurant Association
Associated Builders and Contractors
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Food Marketing Institute
The ERISA Industry Committee
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors
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National Retail Federation
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association
Citizens for a Sound Economy
Society for Human Resource Management
Council for Affordable Health Insurance
Aetna U.S. Healthcare
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New York Life/NYLCARE Health Plans
Premier

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A Matter of the Soul

There is much that I can dispute in Andrew Ferguson's intelligent criticism of my book, *How the Mind Works*, and my article, "Why They Kill Their Newborns" ("How Steven Pinker's Mind Works," Jan. 12). But I will address only his main accusation: that the search for a scientific explanation of the mind undermines morality and leaves me "close enough" to advocating the decriminalization of neonaticide. (As he points out, my position is that neonaticide is "an immoral act" and should not be decriminalized.)

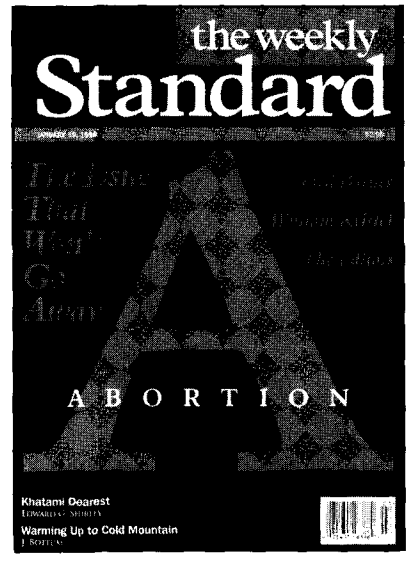
Ferguson is right that I find myself in a "pickle" in failing to find boundaries of personhood in biology. But he missed the whole point of my discussion: Everyone is in that pickle. If you believe the right to life inheres in being sentient, you must conclude that a hamburger-eater is a party to murder. If you believe it inheres in being a member of *Homo sapiens*, you are just a species bigot. If you think it begins with conception, you should prosecute IUD users for murder and divert medical research from preventing cancer and heart disease to preventing the spontaneous miscarriages of vast numbers of microscopic conceptuses. If you think it begins at birth, you should allow abortion minutes before birth, despite the lack of any significant difference between a late-term fetus and a neonate.

Biology does not announce solutions to our moral problems. My view is that we need to work them out by moral reasoning, using concepts such as right and wrong, free will, responsibility, interests, and rights—concepts that are not part of science. Ferguson worries that this makes them "pretenses," "a rickety platform from which to launch the pursuit of right and wrong." But in mathematics we reason with entities that are not part of science, such as perfect circles, infinite lines, and dimensionless points. There is nothing rickety about mathematical reasoning, and there need be nothing rickety about moral reasoning just because it depends on concepts that are not reducible to biology.

In place of moral reasoning, Ferguson seems to suggest that moral issues be resolved by appeals to religion. His argument against neonaticide is that "it has been viewed with abhorrence by Christians from the beginning of their era" because they believed that "human beings were persons from the start, endowed with a soul, created by God, and infinitely precious." But Ferguson evades the obvious problems in solving moral dilemmas by asking religious people what they do and don't abhor. That solution has given us stonings, witch-burnings, crusades, inquisitions, jihads, suicide bombers, abortion-clinic gunmen, and mothers who drown their children so they can be happily reunited in heaven.

It is Ferguson's mentality, not mine, that threatens the foundations of morality. Secular thinkers are prepared to struggle with difficult moral questions by reasoning them out on moral grounds, while welcoming our increasing knowledge about the brain. Ferguson instead seems to want to root morality on the theory that a deity injects a fertilized ovum with a ghostly substance, which registers the world, pulls the levers of behavior, and leaks out at the moment of death. Unfortunately for that theory, brain science has shown that the mind is what the brain does. The supposedly immaterial soul can be bisected with a knife, altered by chemicals, turned on or off by electricity, and extinguished by a sharp blow or a lack of oxygen. Centuries ago it was unwise to ground morality on the dogma that the earth sat at the center of the universe. It is just as unwise today to ground it on dogmas about souls endowed by God.

STEVEN PINKER
CAMBRIDGE, MA



In his review of Steven Pinker's book, Andrew Ferguson writes, "Evolutionary psychology holds a surface attraction for conservatives because it affirms something resembling a universal and intractable human nature." "This is anathema to leftists," Ferguson continues, "since it would thwart any political attempt to remake society along utopian lines. And the human nature thus revealed seems compatible with conservative beliefs and prejudices."

Ferguson's is a classic category mistake. Most know that there are crucial differences between *nature* and *society* (or history).

That some species-wide characteristics are "universal and intractable," and that human beings do indeed have a specific nature, may be a shocker for Ferguson. But it will come as no surprise to sensible people, whatever their political beliefs.

Of course, this point fails to answer the other question—the one that asks what, exactly, human nature might be able to teach us about the ideal form that our social institutions should take, given the kind of creatures we are.

And on this account, Ferguson is equally mistaken. We've got about as much of a reason to postulate a society whose institutions observe "conservative beliefs and prejudices" as we do a society that builds its cities in the clouds.

DAVID PETERSON
EVERGREEN PARK, IL

Uptight over Abortion

William Kristol seems to be uptight and strung-out over the abortion issue ("Roe Must Go," Jan. 19). Granted, this is an important and highly charged problem, but to describe it as "central" is a little much. And then to charge the visibly inept Republican party with the task of remedying an almost insoluble dilemma is somewhere beyond optimistic.

The abortion controversy seems to

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revolve around one question: When does a fertilized egg become a human being with a soul? Many in the clergy are certain that conception is the moment, but many other respected and reputable persons would disagree. Answer? We poor mortals just don't know, and our chances of finding out are nil. Therefore, any hard-line legislative or judicial "solution" is doomed to failure.

A strict pro-life position, which apparently Kristol expects the GOP to enact, will collapse of its own weight just as soon as the abortion equivalent of "bathtub gin" gets in full distribution. We will then have more laws that can't be enforced and more government that doesn't work.

Likewise, a world of unrestricted abortions (including partial-birth) is totally unacceptable in a moral society and will fail. While I cannot agree that it is solely a GOP responsibility to solve this dilemma and that if they fail "there will be no conservative future," it is certainly an "issue of profound moral, political and constitutional importance." But until the propagandists on both sides of the debate decide to bend and agree on some middle ground, the struggle will remain. Until then, I'll stick with saying this: "Personally, I'm pro-life, but I cannot accept the government telling me (and you) that you MUST be pro-life—therefore, politically, I'm pro-choice."

RICHARD E. HALL
PALM BAY, FL

SENATOR BOW TIE

Obviously, the most perceptive piece of journalism I have read in THE WEEKLY STANDARD for a long time was Christopher Stump's column about the bow tie ("Confessions of a Bow-Tie Devotee," Dec. 22)!

SEN. PAUL SIMON
CARBONDALE, IL

USED-CAR DEALERS, UNITE

Where's the outrage, you ask ("Where's the Outrage?," Jan. 12)? It's here, and it's directed at you.

If the Clinton administration behaved as well as a used-car dealership, it would be a treat. If we behaved like the Clinton administration, we would be out of business.

Perhaps used-car dealerships located inside the Beltway behave just like the rest of the jack-legs who live and work there. Do not conclude from this perverted sample that used-car dealerships—operating in the free, competitive environment that is the rest of the United States—practice those arts refined by the Clinton administration.

We don't.

MARK C. KENDALL
MOORESVILLE, IN

Your editorial, in which you state that the government conducts itself like a used-car dealership, is an outrage. I own and operate a new and used-car dealership that has been in business 53 years, and we have never conducted our business like the present government. If we had, we would have been out of business years ago. It's a damn poor analogy. I think you owe the used-car dealers in this country an apology.

JOHN R. DAUNHAUER JR.
LOUISVILLE, KY

MORE ON THE CHAIR

David Frum makes a strong utilitarian case for the death penalty ("The Truth About the Chair," Jan. 19). Yet a moral case can be made, by raising the question as to whether the life of a murderer has the same value as that of his victim. How can civilization survive if the well-being of a murderer is as important as that of his victim?

ALLEN WEINGARTEN
MORRISTOWN, NJ

EVERYBODY DOES IT

Mounting a defense of deceit, J. Bottum acknowledges that Charles Frazier, in his book *Cold Mountain*, is "untrustworthy on women, religion, and war" ("Warming Up to Cold Mountain," Jan. 19). He adds that Frazier willingly violates historical accuracy as well—in the cause, of course, of social correctness. Bottum's critical response to the untrustworthy is a stupefying "So what?"

Frazier's honesty is of no interest to me, but when Bottum claims that no novelist nowadays is entirely trustworthy on women, religion, and war, he invokes the Washingtonian middlebrow's mantra: Everybody does it. It is doubtful that THE WEEKLY STANDARD believes this. However, once within the Beltway, perhaps that is the standard to which one must repair.

Need some honest writers trustworthily writing about war, religion, and women? Try Madison Jones's *Nashville 1864*. Take a look at Mark Helprin's *A Soldier of the Great War*. Is either of these great middlebrow fiction? I don't know. Are they real stories told in a way that contemporary readers will accept as honestly written and to be trusted? You bet.

No, everybody doesn't do it.

TAYLOR HARRIS
SAN DIEGO, CA

NOT CHOSIN FOR COMBAT

The furor over the feminization of the modern military will just have to play itself out (A.J. Bacevich, "Gender Wars and Real Wars," Jan. 12). But we should be cheered by the fact that it will survive only until the first full-scale combat in which women are involved. If there is anyone who seriously believes that women have a role in combat, I suggest he go immediately to the library and read *Chosin*, by Eric Hammell. This is the most comprehensive account of the withdrawal under fire by the 1st Marine Division, and some Army units, from the Chosin Reservoir to Hungnam. Then let the reader imagine what the results would have been had 10 to 14 percent of the units been made up of females.

F. BARZEE
COCOA, FL

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the weekly Standard

THE BIG HE

She appears, in happier times, to have called him "Schmucko," with a vulgar sort of familiar affection. Later on, after things got complicated between them, she renamed him "the Creep." And in those surreptitiously tape-recorded conversations with her confidante, Linda Tripp, Monica Lewinsky also referred to the president of the United States, indelibly, as "the Big He." Not for nothing did this young lady complete a college major in psychology before assuming her position in the White House. That "Big He" locution reflects an unusually acute understanding of where Bill Clinton sees himself with respect to the rest of the universe.

Since 1992, a controlling plurality of American public opinion has at least *pretended* to hold that Clinton is merely a harmless "rogue." Sure, every once in a while someone charges him with violating established norms of personal morality. Sure, even more often, it becomes clear that he has manipulated language and gesture so thoroughly—and from such a commanding position in our public life—as to challenge the very idea of an independent, generally agreed upon political reality. But, gosh, you just have to admire the skill and daring with which he pulls it all off. And, anyhow: peace and prosperity, peace and prosperity. So on balance, if not at heart, Bill Clinton must be judged a good boy.

NOT FOR NOTHING DID MONICA LEWINSKY STUDY PSYCHOLOGY. WHEN SHE CALLED CLINTON "THE BIG HE," SHE WAS ON TO SOMETHING.

Except that most Americans, whether they are aware of it or not, have never really believed this, else they would not have shown such repeated, consuming interest in the Big He's scandals. Especially the sex stuff. There are semi-official explanations for this phenomenon, of course. But they don't add up.

Clinton loyalists—Hillary Clinton, for instance—regularly insist that the controversies are manufactured, top to bottom, by a passel of fanatical right-wingers who mean to destroy her husband, whatever it takes. Acknowledged, there do exist people whose hatred for this president appears always to precede the actual facts in question. But they are known for what they are and they are consequently unable to arrange and sustain a nationwide news story. The "murders" of Vincent Foster and Ron Brown are not on our front pages this morning. Young Monica Lewinsky is. Monica Lewinsky of Brentwood, by way of Park Avenue, the Watergate Apartments, and a Democratic White House. Monica Lewinsky, who has most likely never met a fanatical right-winger in her entire, brief life.

Nor can the Clinton bimbo-eruptions be explained, pop-sociology-wise, purely by reference to a tabloidized modern media. Or to a culture of desensitized voyeurism that now demands soap-opera entertainment even from its constitutional government. Or to other fancy theories. Most American politicians, let's face it, are never subjected to lurid speculation about their private lives. Because most American voters simply couldn't give a damn: They figure they already know all they need to about these elected representatives.

But they do not know, they cannot know, enough about their current president. He is deliberately unknowable. Clinton's is a character of infinite deception and self-deception. He shades and evades on the large issues (abortion, affirmative action, you name it), just as ordinary politicians sometimes do. But he shades and evades—and *automatically*—on the small issues, too. Clinton is a man who cannot bring himself candidly to answer a lighthearted, impromptu query about when he last ate a McDonald's cheeseburger.

There is something alarmingly *off* about it all. This president is, indeed, a "Big He": a narcissist who cannot bear to allow even the tiniest piece of information about himself to float around the world uncontrolled—where it might threaten to unveil his perfect

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self-love as a lie. Bill Clinton is terrified of detection. What might the source of this terror be?

Assume, just for the sake of argument, that things actually did take place in that Little Rock hotel in 1991, just as Paula Jones has always claimed. A few weeks after he has decided to run for president, a sitting governor summons a state employee, whom he has never met, to a private room, where he drops his pants and demands unreciprocal satisfaction. What does this mean?

It means the governor is an unbalanced, irrational, compulsive person—both because such behavior is *per se* unbalanced (and, almost certainly, chronic), and because that behavior, if ever publicly revealed, would devastate his ambitions and inflict pain on his wife and child. To protect himself from such exposure, the governor has developed an elaborate and comprehensive habit of concealment. To put the whole thing over, he has enlisted help from a group of peculiarly willing lieutenants. Together, he and they are on constant, hair-trigger alert for the slightest hint of embarrassment, any kind of embarrassment. And when they catch wind of such a peril, they move quickly and brutally to smother it, with a giant cloud of clever lawyer's talk, preemptive smears, and subject-changing.

It all makes perfect sense: This is Bill Clinton and his presidency in a nutshell. And this, it turns out, is precisely how, at some deeply suppressed level, most Americans always fearfully suspected the Clinton puzzle was put together. Because comes now Monica Lewinsky, with what is apparently the most detailed and corroborated sexual allegation yet leveled against the president. And suddenly, palpably, everything has changed. No one any longer describes Bill Clinton as merely a "rogue." The nation's self-deception about him has finally ended. Few people are inclined to believe his denials. Few people expect him fully to recover from the blow. Few people, in fact, seem to believe he should be *allowed* fully to recover.

This is a grave situation. And because it promises also to be one of unprecedented tawdriness, well-meaning voices are already being raised with the suggestion that we isolate the scandal's elements and concentrate our attention and fury on what is "worst" (and, conveniently, cleanest) about it. The sex business is relatively unimportant, the argument goes, and it

Sean Delonas

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would be unfair to subject a president to higher personal standards and scrutiny than is usually applied to private citizens. Ignore the sex, in other words. What matters is the possibility that the president and his men have attempted to deceive the law through perjury and the subornation of witnesses.

There are two problems here. The first is that ours is not some "sophisticated" European society where it is expected that people will rut like animals on a constant basis—and where it is considered poor form to notice. A 50-year-old president of the United States is credibly accused of having inherently exploitative and adulterous sexual relations, inside the White House, with a 21-year-old office intern. How, exactly, is anyone supposed to ignore that? It is appalling. Such behavior is appalling in every other walk of American life, and when it involves the CEO of a corporation or a tenured professor it justly gets him fired. It is just as appalling . . . no it is vastly *more* appalling when the perpetrator is our elected head of state.

The second problem is more fundamental. When the Monica Lewinsky affair first broke into view, Hillary Clinton told reporters that it was her husband's practice to put such unpleasantness "in a box"—and go on about the business of his presidency as if nothing had happened. This, Bill Clinton will now surely try to do again. But this time he will most likely fail.

He is president in the first place, after all, only because, in January 1992, just before the New Hampshire primary, he categorically denied—or seemed to be categorically denying—that he had ever slept with Gennifer Flowers. According to the *Washington Post*, two weeks ago, in a sworn deposition to Paula Jones's attorneys, Clinton acknowledged that this crucial, six-year-old claim was false.

It is rapidly dawning on the nation that there are not, in fact, two discrete halves of Bill Clinton. The sex is the political deception, and the political deception is the sex. And the whole thing is pathological. And it has dominated our collective business for much too long. But not, perhaps, for too much longer.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Catching the Greased Pig

by P.J. O'Rourke

For six years, covering the Bill Clinton scandals has been like being in a greased-pig contest. So the Monica Lewinsky disgrace raises the question, What do you do with a greased pig once you catch him?

The damage that the Clinton presidency is going to do to the republic has mostly been done. Clinton has introduced his legislative idiocies, performed his budgetary legerdemain, made his foreign-policy mischief, and inured the American people to a chief executive with low principles, high turpitude, and wide moral cowardice. It's a little late to nab him now.

Must Congress impeach the fellow? This would leave the dangerously loopy Al Gore in charge. It would be tougher for a Republican presidential candidate to face an incumbent, even a woody-stemmed, sap-spouting one with his roots tangled in the fund-raising sewer. And Gore remembers Jerry Ford's political Vince Foster act with the Nixon pardon.

If Congress does feel compelled to impeach Clinton, my advice would be to do it in the true pulled-pork barbecue fashion—very slowly. A key Clinton strategy, with all his previous scandals, has been to play for time. Congress should turn the scheme on the schemer. A lollygagging impeachment process would let Clinton's past dirt be brought into public view again and allow leisure for new muck to be raked. And prolonged impeachment proceedings, even if ultimately unsuccessful, would leave a pack of exhausted and quarreling Democrats to run against in 2000. True, a lengthy impeachment would tie up the resources of the White House and Congress and bring the federal government to a virtual halt. But I'm a conservative of libertarian bent, and I wouldn't mind a bit.

Congress may have a future role in the Lewinsky Affair, but we in the conservative media have a role to play right now. And our role is to stay out of it. The *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the network news shows have been carrying Bill Clinton's water for years. Now let them drown him. The journalism establishment may be liberal, but it likes nasty journalism better than it likes Bill. The Clinton White House has shrugged off past accusations by saying they had their source in partisan hatreds and right-wing-nut conspiracy theories. Let's hear the White House call Sam Donaldson and Katherine Graham names.

Personally, I'm phoning all the talk-radio shows and saying, "Rush, Gordon, I'm a member of a New Hampshire militia, a bit of a gold bug, and I've got my own Mena airport Web site, but I think, in this case, we shouldn't jump to conclusions. Let's just let the

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facts come out." Of course the facts may not come out. But that's also fine with me. I see only two Clinton Squirm Scenarios:

1. Clinton admits to having sex with Monica Lewinsky but claims that he never urged her to lie. Indeed, he urged her to tell the whole truth when subpoenaed. In this case the nation sees that we have a pathetic fool with deep-seated psychological problems for a president. (And punishment, more severe than even Gordon Liddy would recommend, will be meted out by Mrs. Clinton.)

2. Clinton does not admit to having sex with Monica Lewinsky and claims she made the whole thing up. In this case the nation sees that the full prestige and influence of the presidency were used to get a Pentagon job, a Top Secret clearance, free legal advice from Vernon Jordan, and recruitment offers from Bill Richardson and various major U.S. corporations for a pathetic fool with deep-seated psychological problems.

Either way Clinton has found his place in history—the pathetic fool with deep-seated psychological problems place.

I'm so pleased with this latest scandal that I'm going to do more than stay out of it; I'm going to take the president's side. I'm going to go out and talk to members of Clinton's core constituency—women, labor, and minorities. I'll tell the minorities, "Clinton's all right. I'll bet it was Vernon Jordan's fault." I'll tell labor, "The intern did it. Interns are there to bust the civil-service wage scale. This is what the White House gets for hiring scab labor." And I'll tell women, "Big deal if he fooled around. What do you think interns are *for*? You can't chase secretaries around the desk anymore or you get the EEOC on your neck."

I'm supporting my president. I figure I can do more damage that way. And maybe I'll get a job at Revlon.

P.J. O'Rourke is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

THE END OF THE CLINTON ERA

by Fred Barnes

PRESIDENT CLINTON ISN'T DEAD YET. A prosecutable case against him will be difficult to make, since it may come down to the word of 24-year-old Monica Lewinsky against the denials of Clinton and Washington lawyer Vernon Jordan. Chances are, the president will survive the three final years of his second term. But just barely. The Clinton presidency as we know it is gone. If the Lewinsky case and its ramifications don't overwhelm Clinton's agenda, the Paula Jones trial will. Clinton's popularity, already slipping, is likely to drop like a brick. His clout with Congress and the political community and the media is rapidly evaporating. So the stage is set for Republicans to make significant gains in the November election against demoralized Democrats, stuck with a president they won't want to rally behind or even acknowledge.

CLINTON'S PRESIDENCY AS WE KNOW IT IS GONE. HIS CLOUT WITH CONGRESS AND THE MEDIA IS RAPIDLY EVAPORATING.

But impeachment? Don't hold your breath. At the moment, independent counsel Kenneth Starr has only one strong piece of evidence against Clinton—the allegations on tape of Monica Lewinsky—and he needs another. The tape includes Lewinsky's talk of an affair with Clinton and her insistence the president and Jordan advised her to deny this under oath. Incriminating as this is, the tape alone won't bring down Clinton. Starr needs Lewinsky as a live witness willing to repeat everything she said on the tape, and more, to a federal grand jury. But he hasn't got her yet.

Starr had no reason to be encouraged by the initial negotiations with Lewinsky lawyer William Ginsburg, by Ginsburg's later criticism of Starr's tactics, or by the brush-off his office got from a Ginsburg associate on January 23. In negotiations with Starr, Ginsburg wants full immunity from prosecution for Lewinsky. In exchange, he's offered only the skimpiest idea of what she might tell the grand jury. She would testify she told Jordan of her sexual relationship with Clinton, contrary to Jordan's story. But the lawyer said Lewinsky would not assert anyone had told her to lie, contradicting what she says on tape.

Starr rejected this offer and asked that she sit down for several hours of interrogation with his investigators. Afterwards, he would decide if she had useful testimony and, if so, seek an ironclad agreement on

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what she'd tell the grand jury. Starr doesn't want a repeat of the Webb Hubbell episode, in which the Clinton pal arranged a plea bargain, then didn't deliver the expected testimony implicating Clinton. In exchange for Lewinsky's testimony, Starr said he'd seek leniency in her own legal difficulties. On tape, she allegedly urges her friend Linda Tripp to give false testimony in a deposition in the Paula Jones sexual-harassment suit against Clinton. That would be a felony.

If Lewinsky comes around, perhaps after Starr drops the idea of prosecuting her, the independent counsel still won't have a slam-dunk case of obstruction of justice against Clinton. In his public statements, the president is vague about his relationship with Lewinsky, but he's flatly denied urging anyone to lie. Jordan has denied the charge even more strenuously. That would leave Starr with one witness, a young woman once infatuated with Clinton, who disputes the word of the president and Washington's leading black attorney. Would Democrats join an impeachment drive in that circumstance? I'm not betting on it, but Democrats are beginning to waver. "I don't think the president can survive" if the allegations prove true, pro-Clinton Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., told Fox News Channel. This is important because Rep. Henry Hyde, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, believes any impeachment would have to be bipartisan.

AP Photo / Ruth Fremson

The president and his pal Vernon Jordan on vacation last summer

There's a worst-case scenario for Starr: a refusal by Lewinsky to testify. Suppose she claims she fabricated the whole story about Clinton and sex and perjury. That wouldn't be very credible, but it would cripple the case against Clinton nonetheless. Starr's only recourse would be to prosecute her for perjury and obstruction of justice in hopes a conviction might change her mind. At the same time, Starr would come under withering attacks from Clinton's defenders, who'd zing him for persecuting a naive young woman and obsessing on Clinton's sex life. The president would escape impeachment, but he'd still have some serious explaining to do. If Lewinsky truly concocted the whole tale, why didn't Clinton simply say that instantly and explain the nature of his relationship with her? And why didn't he immediately release the Secret Service records if they show no visits by her or only visits to other people at the White House? My guess is he first wants to know what tack Lewinsky is taking. If she's on his side, he doesn't want to contradict even the smallest detail in her account.

Whatever Clinton's fate, the political environment has changed dramatically. Assume, as I do, the president hangs on. His misery will continue. The Lewinsky case will linger for months, as witnesses such as Jordan are hauled before the grand jury in Washington. Reporters will pursue the scores of fresh leads suddenly laid in their path. Who wrote the talking points that Lewinsky gave to Tripp, outlining how Tripp should give false testimony? Who were the three other White House employees who Lewinsky supposedly claims on tape were paramours of Clinton? And so on. Then, in May, the trial of the century begins in Arkansas, pitting Paula Jones against Clinton, with sex as the subject matter. Maybe worse, hours of Lewinsky's taped conversations are sure to become public.

All of which presents Republicans with an incredible opportunity. Back in Watergate days, Democrats exploited President Nixon's weakness to enact the War Powers Act, create a new budget process, and jack up spending. Now, if Republicans don't screw up, they can substitute much of their agenda for Clinton's: a ban on partial-birth abortion, a serious tax cut for individuals, a child-care bill far different from the one envisioned by the Clinton administration, a more aggressive stand against liberal judges and judicial nominees. And that's only for starters. The opening is there, so long as Republicans don't get sidetracked with intra-party squabbles over impeachment.

A final opportunity comes in November. Pre-Monica, Republicans stood to make solid gains in the House and Senate, while holding their own in governorships. Now, the size of their potential gains has multiplied. It's not because Republicans are so smart and deserving. It's because Democrats are devastated over Clinton's troubles and likely to stay that way. Tra-

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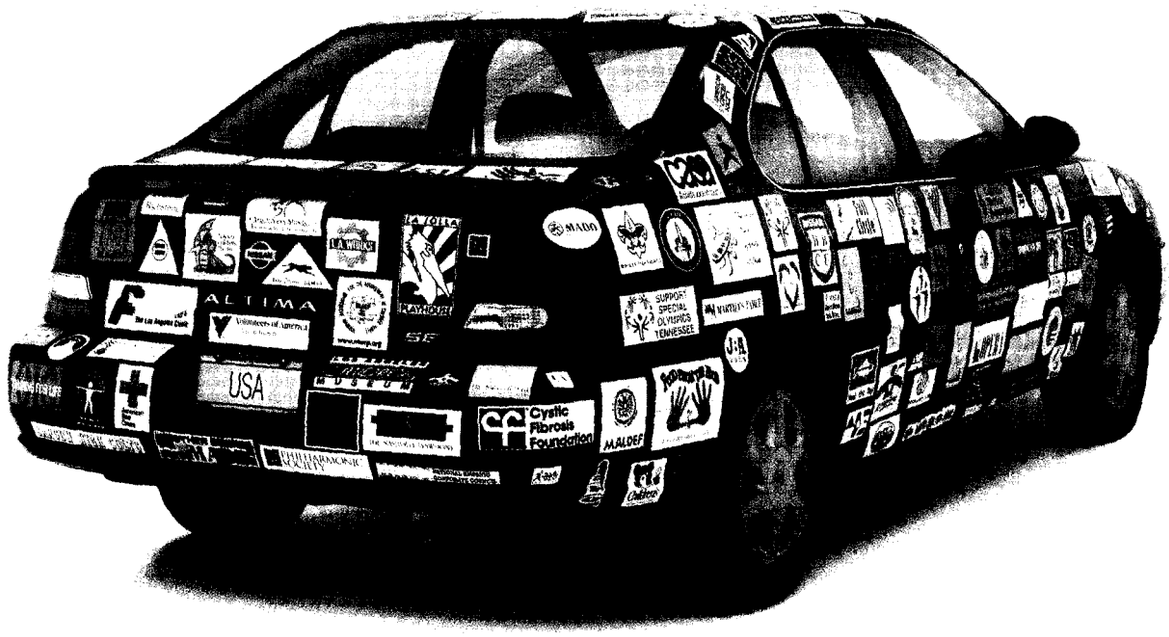

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ditionally, the party in the White House suffers big-time at the polls in the sixth year of a presidency. But for the six-year itch to work, something has to act as catalyst. In 1974, it was Watergate, which didn't boost Democratic turnout but kept millions of disillusioned Republicans from voting. This time, the catalyst is named Monica.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

THE TRUTH ABOUT PERJURY

by David Frum

IN THE FIRST HOURS AND DAYS of the burgeoning Monica Lewinsky scandal, reporters naturally wanted to find out whether the president had personally urged the onetime White House intern to lie under oath, or if he himself had lied in the deposition taken by Paula Jones's lawyers. But in their relentless focus on perjury—one of the hardest crimes to prove—the White House press corps neglected the key legal lesson of Watergate: You do not need to commit perjury yourself to be guilty of obstruction of justice. Nixon never did.

Instead, as Rep. Lawrence Hogan of Maryland said when he stepped forward as the first Republican member of the House Judiciary Committee to announce his intention to vote for impeachment in 1974, Nixon "lied repeatedly, deceiving public officials and the American people. He has withheld information necessary for our system of justice to work. Instead of cooperating with prosecutors and investigators, as he said publicly, he concealed and covered up evidence, and coached witnesses so that their testimony would show things that really were not true. He tried to use the CIA to impede the investigation of Watergate by the FBI. He approved the payment of what he knew to be blackmail to buy the silence of an important Watergate witness. [He] praised and rewarded those who he knew had committed perjury. He personally helped to orchestrate a scenario of events, facts and testimony to cover up wrongdoing in the Watergate scandal and to throw investigators and prosecutors off the track. He actively participated in an extended and extensive conspiracy to obstruct justice."

In May 1973, a "highly placed source" told the *Washington Post*, "Watergate was a natural action that grew from existing circumstances. It grew out of an atmosphere. The way of life was not new. There have been fairly broad [illegal and quasi-legal] activities from the beginning of the Administration. I didn't know when national security ended and political espionage started." From lax ethics, to near-criminality, to conspiracy, to outright lawbreaking was a natural evolution a quarter-century ago; it remains a natural evolution now. Where there is one act of wrongdoing, there are usually others.

It takes only a little crack to tear open a big dam. The dam here is the vast reservoir of Clinton-administration wrongdoing. And one thing that the Clintonites should remember is that, when the dam bursts, all sorts of once-innocent people who came to Washington intending to do no more than help a president they believed in, but who imperceptibly slid into abetting his illegalities, can get hurt. Those idealistic Republicans, many of them surprisingly young, who decided to tough things out for Nixon suffered badly for it. A total of 19 Nixon aides went to jail, and many others faced disbarment and other ethical proceedings. The Clinton scandals—campaign finance, Filegate, Whitewater—are collectively far more pervasive and variegated even than Watergate itself. Which means that there may be many, many more than two dozen people who will find themselves in trouble, unless they step forward soon to clear themselves.

Monica Lewinsky is not the John Dean of the Clinton administration—she knows too little. She is instead the James McCord, the Watergate burglar who, after hanging tough, eventually decided to talk. But there must exist many potential John Deans, who are right now weighing the odds of prison against their feelings of loyalty to their president. Everyone involved in manipulating the testimony of any witness or potential witness in the Paula Jones lawsuit has placed himself on the wrong side of the law.

Those campaign aides charged with preventing "bimbo eruptions" in 1992, for instance—that's fine in the context of a campaign. But similar actions intended to deter women from coming forward to offer evidence that would corroborate Paula Jones's story would make one vulnerable to charges of witness-tampering. Similarly, if the Clinton-administration officials and staffers who sought employment for Monica Lewinsky knew why it was so important to keep her happy, they are courting subornment of perjury and obstruction of justice charges. The author or

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authors of the memo that advised West Wing witnesses to alter their accounts of the groping of Kathleen Willey—he or they are vulnerable too.

And it doesn't halt there. Clinton's sex life is far from this administration's only scandal. What about the vanished witnesses in the campaign-finance investigations? Did anyone advise them that it would be wise to flee? Missing documents, billing records that turned up late or not at all—did anyone hide them from investigators? Those acts, too, potentially constitute obstruction of justice.

Nor is it only the president and his political aides who are exposed to the wrath of the law. The code of professional conduct forbids lawyers to represent a client whom they know to be planning to perjure himself. The representation Bob Bennett and others have given this administration has been vigorous, to put it mildly. Has any of them ever straggled over the line into actual knowledge of presidential lying? Has any advised anyone to shape testimony in ways that constitute perjury? If so, then such a person faces disbarment at a minimum.

Theoretically, of course, anyone with guilty knowledge should confess it out of pure public-spiritedness. Alas, White Houses seldom work that way. John Dean broke ranks in the end because he figured out that, though his president accepted loyalty, he did not return it; that he would cheerfully consign Dean or anyone else to jail in order to clear himself. Surely there must be some Clintonite brainy enough to figure out—if only on the basis of the stories of the president's sexual proclivities—that you cannot expect reciprocity from Bill Clinton.

Last week was the week that the Washington press corps decided it was sick of being used. But journalists who permit themselves to be used suffer nothing worse than professional embarrassment. What we are waiting for now, as the federal bloodhounds close in, is the moment when one or more of Clinton's aides, protectors, or henchmen decide that they, too, are sick of being used; that they will no longer shut down their consciences for the sake of a man who values his own presidency so little that he would risk it for a fleeting, illicit pleasure. What we are wondering, as we wait, is how many of his aides, how many Democratic office-holders Clinton will take with him if he falls. And what those people now on the verge of tumbling with Clinton ought to ask themselves is: Is this man really worth it?

David Frum is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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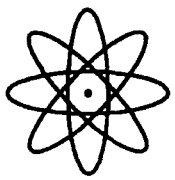

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THE REVLON CONNECTION

by Kim Eisler

WITH UNCTUOUS PIETY, former independent counsel Lawrence Walsh, of Iran-contra fame, declared repeatedly last week that he feels sorry for Kenneth Starr. Poor Ken, he said: so far away from investigating an Arkansas land deal, now trapped in the story of a presidential peccadillo.

Walsh had reason to feel a pang, but mostly because Starr has managed to do in four years what Walsh failed to do in seven: nail somebody. Furthermore, Walsh proved himself an incompetent analyst of the present situation: Starr's leap into the Monica Lewinsky affair has everything to do with Whitewater, his original brief. If successful, he will ultimately link all of the events related to Whitewater and tie his investigation into a 360-degree loop. The Lewinsky story is not peripheral to Whitewater; indeed, it is the key to it.

As Webb Hubbell admits in his book, *Friends in High Places*, he was deeply involved in the Whitewater Development Project, as well as the controversial side-affair known as Castle Grande. Starr has long believed, and believes now more than ever, that Hubbell can unravel the Whitewater story and its complicated series of arrangements, earnings, and payoffs.

After Hubbell was indicted by the Office of Independent Counsel for stealing nearly $500,000 from his law partners—including Hillary Rodham Clinton—presidential friend and adviser Vernon Jordan put in a call to Ron Perelman, the chairman of the Revlon Corporation. Jordan is a member of the company's board of directors. Jordan also talked to Barry Schwartz, Revlon's general counsel, about doing something to help Hubbell make money until his trial. Perelman agreed to a deal whereby Hubbell would be paid $25,000 per quarter for "public relations" work. (What better spokesman for a company than a man under indictment?)

After being paid $63,000 by Revlon, Hubbell pleaded guilty to mail fraud and tax evasion, in a plea

Sean Delonas

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bargain. He was sentenced to two years in a federal penitentiary. It was Starr's impression that, as a result of the plea bargain, Hubbell would become a cooperating witness against the Clintons. After the sentencing, however, Hubbell turned turtle. He didn't give Starr a thing. Once out of prison, he published his book, in which he offered little of interest.

For two years, Starr's anger at Hubbell's double cross has simmered. The frustration of being certain that Hubbell was given hush money—and of being unable to prove it—has gnawed at him.

Enter Linda Tripp and her story of Clinton's relationship with the young intern, Monica Lewinsky. Just why would Starr rush to Attorney General Janet Reno to secure her cooperation and then go to the relevant three-judge panel to have the inquiry expanded? Sources inside the independent counsel's office say that the normally placid Starr nearly hyperventilated on learning what, to him, was the most sensational detail of them all: that Jordan had called his old friend Perelman and asked him to get Monica Lewinsky a p.r. job at Revlon. Suddenly, things were starting to sound very, very familiar.

Suppose, Starr ruminated, Vernon Jordan was at the center of a conspiracy to keep Lewinsky silent? (This is, after all, what is implied on the Tripp tapes.) Jordan's discussions with Perelman might well bring Revlon itself into the heart of the conspiracy. Starr probably can't indict President Clinton, but how about naming Jordan and Revlon as defendants and sticking a few RICO statutes into the mix for good measure?

Overnight, Starr acquired the big stick he needs to get back to the Webb Hubbell case. And already, Revlon is nervous. Hours after the news broke, the company issued a statement saying that it had withdrawn its job offer to Lewinsky. With the possibility that Clinton will go down, and Jordan with him, Revlon executives may at long last be ready to tell Starr what he most wants to heart: that Webb Hubbell was paid for the specific purpose of keeping him silent. (It will be interesting to see whether the company retains Jordan as a director.) Barry Schwartz, for his part, testified before Starr's grand jury in 1994. Threatened with a possible perjury indictment, Schwartz may be in a more cooperative mood when Starr speaks to him again.

This is the thread that ties Lewinsky to Whitewater, and does so tightly. Once Revlon executives spill the beans, Hubbell will be faced with a choice: return to prison or continue to defend an administration that, for all practical purposes, is already out the door. At this point, Starr believes, Hubbell will finally agree to talk. The statute of limitations may have run out on the savings-and-loan crimes, but the payment of hush money, obstruction of justice, and destruction of documents become real and timely.

Best of all for Starr, he may finally be able to pursue his investigation without having to worry about disrupting the country with an unpleasant impeachment inquiry or the spectacle of trying a first lady. Starr has enough evidence in hand to run the Clintons back where they came from, without a trial by the Senate. He now has the opportunity to push forward with only one nagging concern: Will President Gore pardon his predecessor?

Kim Eisler, formerly the senior editor of **Legal Times**, *is national editor of* **Washingtonian** *magazine. He is the author of, among other books,* **Justice for All**, *a biography of William Brennan.*

THEY JUST DON'T GET IT

by Tucker Carlson

TWO DAYS AFTER THE WHITE HOUSE sex story broke in the United States, *Al Hayat*, an influential Arabic-language newspaper published in London, ran large, above-the-fold photographs of Monica Lewinsky and President Clinton. "President's Relationship With Daughter of Jewish Doctor May Be Cause of His Resignation," explained the bold headline. For readers who missed the point, the accompanying story identified Lewinsky as "the daughter of a famous Jewish doctor in Beverly Hills, California."

Few American news outlets have reported on Lewinsky's religious background, and Dana Sandarusi, the Washington-based correspondent who wrote the story for *Al Hayat*, is hesitant to reveal where he learned that the world's most famous intern is, in fact, Jewish. "I really can't comment on that," he says cryptically. Sandarusi does say that the people who read *Al Hayat* will be very interested to know about Lewinsky's heritage. "People's backgrounds are of interest to our readers," he explains. "People like to know who people are. The first question that comes to mind is, *who* is saying something, as much as what they are saying."

Actually, the first question that comes to mind is, Why is the foreign press so appallingly bad? Pick an

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unflattering stereotype of the foreign media, and a brief survey of the coverage of the Lewinsky affair will confirm it as true. And no stereotype turns out to be more true than the perception that British newspapers are inaccurate, shallow, and trashy.

Consider a recent front-page story in the London *Guardian*, "Sex, Lies, and Bill Clinton." Much of the story clearly is derived from American wire-service accounts. Yet somehow the reporter has managed to insert a significant error or false implication into almost every paragraph. According to the account, written by *Guardian* Washington correspondent Martin Kettle, it was not a semi-anonymous panel of judges who expanded Ken Starr's investigation to include Monica Lewinsky, but "Chief Justice William Rehnquist" himself. As for Lewinsky, Kettle reports that she is not, as was previously assumed, jobless and facing the prospect of serious criminal charges. Instead, Miss Lewinsky is "about to start work" at the United Nations.

NO STEREOTYPE TURNS OUT TO BE MORE TRUE THAN THE PERCEPTION THAT BRITISH NEWSPAPERS ARE INACCURATE AND SHALLOW.

To these facts, the *Daily Telegraph* added color. In a story meant to provide background on the Lewinsky matter, the *Telegraph* last week recounted, without a cited source, country singer Tammy Wynette's reaction to Hillary Clinton's famous "stand by your man" comments on *60 Minutes* six years ago: "'How dare that bitch say that about me,' [Wynette] said, leaping up from the television set in Nashville, Tennessee." Citing an unnamed source from another publication, the *Telegraph* had Mrs. Clinton "complaining that since she, too, is a woman, she has need of [the president's] husbandly attention herself, and more than three times a year."

The center-left *Independent*, meanwhile, refused to join in the anti-Clinton frenzy. In an ostensibly straight news account, the *Independent* suggested that Monica Lewinsky was a "star-struck, fame-seeking fantasist unable to repress the temptation to tell Ms. Tripp a tall story on tape." Indeed, the whole scandal, the paper implied, was probably the work of "Clinton-haters on the Republican right who, out of despair and frustration at their failure to make Whitewater and a whole host of other charges against the president stick, have now concocted this latest allegation from nothing." Keep in mind that the *Telegraph* and the *Independent* are broadsheets. The British tabloids are even zestier.

North of London, and in much of the rest of the English-speaking world, the reaction to the scandal has been less graphic, but considerably more disapproving. "It is not for us to lecture the American people on their attitude on political leadership," conceded an editorial in Friday's *Scotsman*. On the other hand, scolded the paper, Clinton's behavior may very well have "dangerous implications—for all nations." And not just Clinton's behavior. Striking a particularly dour note, the *Scotsman* pointed out that something has been terribly wrong in the White House for at least 40 years. The United States, it concluded, "has deserved better these four decades past."

Canada's *Globe and Mail* agreed ("Mr. Clinton's promiscuity and adultery seem unspeakably prolific and foolish," said an editorial), as did the *Economist*, which made reference to the president's "sleaze" problem and "wandering hands" in the first two sentences of a news story.

Monica Lewinsky, of course, wasn't big news everywhere. In Asia, business remained Story Number One. The only American politician quoted in last Friday's final edition of the *Japan Times*, for instance, was Republican Jim Leach of Iowa, chairman of the House Banking and Financial Services Committee, and he had nothing to say about interns. A front-page story in the *Straits Times* of Singapore likewise left readers no clue that ordinary political life in Washington had all but stopped. "Clinton Launches Drive to Get More Funding for IMF," it blared. For its story of the week, *China Daily*, the "national English-language newspaper" of the Communist mainland, chose "New Plan Outlined to Boost Agriculture," while the North Korean version of the AP—the Korean Central News Agency of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea—didn't stray from the usual assortment of Socialist Triumphs. "Reservoirs Built in Burkina Faso with DPRK Help," boasted one headline.

But it wasn't just Stalinist countries that ignored the White House scandal. By the end of last week, the *Liechtenstein News* (the English-language edition of "the largest daily newspaper of the Principality of Liechtenstein") remained perhaps the last newspaper in the Free World still untouched by Monica Lewinsky. As of Friday, the paper's front page still reflected the placid tastes of its readership: "New Insurance Company," "Golf Practising Range for Everybody," and "Government in No Hurry."

Not very exciting, to be sure, but every word of it unimpeachably true.

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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SADDAM'S IMPENDING VICTORY

By Robert Kagan

"With dictators, nothing succeeds like success." That observation, by Adolf Hitler, is not as trite as it sounds. Hitler was referring to his own successful remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936. Before he moved into the Rhineland, Hitler was securely "in his box," as the Clinton administration would say. Pursuant to the Versailles Treaty and the Locarno pact of 1926, Germany had been forced to keep this territory demilitarized as a guarantee against renewed aggression: An unguarded Rhineland left Germany naked to a French attack. From the German point of view, this was not "fair"; it violated German sovereignty. But it was the price Germany paid for invading France and the low countries in 1914. And it was the lid on the box that contained Hitler's grand strategic ambitions.

Hitler was determined to remove it. To do so, however, required an enormous gamble. Hitler was weak. Germany was still struggling through the Depression. And Germany's armed forces were still in pitiful shape, hopelessly outgunned by the French. Had the French army responded in force to the remilitarization, had it simply marched into the Rhineland, Hitler would have had to retreat. As he later recalled, "a retreat on our part would have spelled collapse"—the collapse, that is, of Hitler's rule. "The forty-eight hours after the march into the Rhineland were the most nerve-wracking in my life."

But, of course, the French did not respond militarily. For a variety of reasons, including a significant overestimation of Hitler's military strength, the French government and armed forces had decided that an invasion of the Rhineland was too risky. Instead, when Hitler made his move, the French sent a formal protest to the League of Nations. The British government, for its part, urged the French "not to make the situation more difficult." Seventeen years after the Versailles Treaty, many people had forgotten why it was so important to keep German troops out of the Rhineland. The British foreign minister said the best course of action was to "conclude with [Germany] as far-reaching and enduring a settlement as is possible whilst Herr Hitler is in the mood to do so." Hitler's gamble worked. His stunning success bolstered his rule at home. And he was out of the box.

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For some years now, Saddam Hussein has been in a box. The settlement imposed on Iraq after the conclusion of the Persian Gulf War required him to open his country to inspection by the United Nations to determine how far he had advanced in the production of weapons of mass destruction and to ensure that all such capabilities, and such weapons, were destroyed. This imposition, embodied in the U.N. Security Council resolutions that ended the war, was not "fair"; it was a serious infringement of Iraqi sovereignty. But it was the price Saddam paid for invading Kuwait and for threatening during the war to rain chemical and biological weapons down on Israel and U.S. and allied troops.

For Saddam, whose conventional military strength had been decimated in 1991 and could not be restored for many years, weapons of mass destruction provided the quickest, surest, and indeed, the only route back to strategic dominance in the Middle East. As Rolf Ekeus, the former head of UNSCOM, the U.N.'s weapons-monitoring operation, said last year, weapons of mass destruction "make the difference between Iraq's being a regional power and a major international power." Finding and destroying Saddam's ability to produce weapons of mass destruction, therefore, was an essential part of guaranteeing that Saddam could not again threaten neighboring states. The U.N. effort to rid Iraq of such weapons capabilities was supposed to put the lid on Saddam's grand strategic ambitions.

Today the lid is about to come off. Saddam Hussein, weak, isolated, and impoverished as he is, has decided to take his big gamble. The crisis he set off last October when he blocked U.N. inspectors came to a head last week when Iraqi deputy prime minister

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Tariq Aziz told UNSCOM chief Richard Butler that a number of sites in Iraq—the so-called presidential palaces—would remain off-limits for two more months at least. Saddam Hussein also issued an ultimatum last week calling for the U.N. to wrap up its inspections by May and lift the sanctions. Since these demands, as he well knows, are probably unacceptable to the Clinton administration, Saddam's purpose is clear: He aims to force a showdown with the United States. He has, so to speak, marched his troops into the Rhineland and now waits to see what the United States will do.

Saddam, however, is probably resting a good bit more comfortably than Hitler could in 1936. For unlike Hitler, he has a pretty good idea of what the United States and its allies will do in response to his latest move and, more important, what they will not do.

Kevin Chadwick

For the Clinton administration the options have severely narrowed. To return to the Security Council in search of yet another resolution condemning Iraq's intransigence would be embarrassingly futile. Even if the administration could persuade the rest of the Security Council to ratchet up the sanctions, Saddam would only have to hold firm for a few weeks to demonstrate the impotence of the new, tougher sanctions. How long would it be before Russia, France, and China returned to the position they took at the beginning of the crisis, that carrots work better with Saddam than sticks? Meanwhile, Saddam would have bought more time to work on his biological and chemical projects, bringing the day closer when, as British foreign secretary Robin Cook warned last week, he will have anthrax warheads on his missiles.

For these reasons, and also for domestic political reasons, the purely diplomatic option is probably no longer attractive for President Clinton. Last week, Clinton said that "something has to give." He may now begin trying to build support in the Security Council for military action. And Saddam knows this. Indeed, it may be that Saddam not only knows this; he intends it. Saddam may well have purposely driven the Clinton administration to resorting to the military option.

If this is Saddam's plan, it is not a bad one. Such a strategy would rest on a number of fairly reasonable calculations about the diplomatic and military situation he faces.

In the first place, Saddam knows it will be difficult for Clinton to gain the kind of international support he would like for military action. The Russians have made their opposition clear, and they may well be supported in the Security Council by the French and Chinese. The Arab states are nervous about military action, at best, and may oppose it. Clinton's efforts to rally international support may, therefore, simply founder, as they did in 1993 when secretary of state Warren Christopher went to Europe to get support for military action in Bosnia and came home empty-handed. It took two more years for Clinton to work up the will to use military force in Bosnia. Saddam would be delighted to have two more years.

But suppose Clinton is undeterred by the lack of international support and decides to go in alone, or perhaps with the British as his only ally. Saddam knows, and the Clinton administration knows, too, that Clinton's biggest problem then is the nature of the military action the Pentagon has prepared for him.

It isn't very hard to guess what form that action would take. If and when President Clinton decides to order the use of force, it will not be another "pinprick" airstrike or the launching of a few dozen cruise missiles. But it won't be the kind of massive, sustained air campaign that began Desert Storm either, with many weeks of steady bombing against a broad range of strategic targets throughout Iraq. It will most likely be a shorter campaign of bombing and missile strikes, designed chiefly to destroy as many suspected chemical and biological weapons storage and production sites as possible.

The problem is, the consequences of such an air

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campaign, or even of a somewhat broader campaign aimed at destroying some of Iraq's conventional forces, would not be intolerable to Saddam. Above all, he would still be alive and in charge in Baghdad. The air campaign didn't kill him in Desert Storm, and the United States has not in the last six years developed missiles that can find individuals with big mustaches. Nor would he have lost the bulk of his armed forces. Finally, we would have no confidence that the air strikes had knocked out all or even most of his biological and chemical weapons program. If Desert Storm did not destroy that program, why would a much smaller air campaign do so? In any event, we would need to get the U.N. inspectors back into Iraq to verify precisely what the air strikes had and had not managed to destroy. And Saddam would still be in a position to deny them the free access they require.

In other words, we would be back to where we are today. Only worse. Having played his hole card, having employed his maximal military option, Clinton would be bereft of further options. Those in the international community who had opposed military action would be free to claim that the United States had taken its best shot and failed. Now, they would say, it was time for a different, more accommodating approach. Perhaps some would even echo Anthony Eden's sentiments of sixty years ago and propose that the world conclude as far-reaching and enduring a settlement as was possible whilst Herr Hussein was in the mood to do so. This would be an unmitigated victory for Saddam. And for a dictator, nothing succeeds like success.

The real problem today is not that President Clinton has so far refused to take military action. It is that the Clinton administration is unlikely to embrace the kind of military option that is needed. This has thoroughly undermined American strategy and diplomacy. Nervous Arab states, not surprisingly, are unenthusiastic about yet another American military action that neither kills Saddam nor destroys his capacity to harm them. From their point of view, if the United States is not going to get rid of Saddam, they are better off trying to make their own peace with him. The Russians and French are undoubtedly telling their counterparts in the Clinton administration that the planned air campaign will be worse than futile. And, of course, Clinton officials don't need to be told this. They already know it, which is surely one reason they have not so far pursued it.

The dirty little secret, then, is that Clinton's diplomatic efforts are failing because they are not really backed by the threat of force. Because the proposed military action is inadequate, it cannot threaten Saddam into compliance. Because Saddam cannot be threatened into compliance, the Clinton administration must resort to a diplomatic strategy that every day looks more like simple appeasement. It is not Saddam who is playing the weak hand, therefore, but Clinton. And it is not Saddam who is now in a box, but the United States.

There is only one way for the United States to get out of its box, and that is to change the goals of American policy in Iraq and to change radically the type of military action we intend to use against Saddam.

Before the Clinton administration found itself in its current helpless condition, senior officials and spokesmen used to declare ritualistically that they would never agree to lifting all the sanctions against Iraq so long as Saddam remained in charge. As Secretary of State Albright said last March, "Our view, which is unshakable, is that Iraq must prove its peaceful intentions. And the evidence is overwhelming that Saddam Hussein's intentions will never be peaceful." This was a rather circuitous but not especially subtle way of saying that the United States hoped the sanctions would eventually force Saddam from power, that U.S. policy aimed ultimately at Saddam's removal. It is a measure of how far the Clinton administration has traveled toward appeasement since last November that the insistence on peaceful intentions has been dropped. Recently national security adviser Sandy Berger compared Saddam to a prisoner who was serving a sentence—the implication being that some day he would be released.

But the Clinton administration was right the first time. The evidence *is* overwhelming that Saddam's intentions will never be peaceful—and far more so today than when Albright made her statement a year ago. It turns out that the international strategy for preventing Saddam from obtaining weapons of mass destruction was flawed from the beginning. As Rolf Ekeus has noted, the assumption when the U.N. inspections regime was established in 1991 was that Baghdad would be eager to get Iraqi oil flowing again, and so would be willing to cooperate with UNSCOM to resolve rapidly the problem of weapons of mass destruction. Over the past six years, this assumption has proved to be mistaken. Saddam has shown beyond any doubt that he is determined to produce weapons of mass destruction as a means of regaining his strategic dominance of the Middle East, and that he cannot be deterred by sanctions or oil embargoes, or even by airstrikes.

Which leads us to the conclusion that has so far been assiduously avoided, both by the Clinton admin-

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istration and by members of Congress in both parties, even the hawkish: The only solution to the problem in Iraq today is to use air power *and* ground power, and not to stop until we have finished what President Bush began in 1991. An air campaign is not enough. Only ground forces can find and destroy weapons-production facilities with a high degree of confidence that they have been destroyed. Only ground forces can provide the time and the access for inspectors to go in and insure that the job has been done. And, above all, only ground forces can remove Saddam and his regime from power and open the way for a new post-Saddam Iraq whose intentions can safely be assumed to be benign.

Impossible? Unthinkable? It shouldn't be, if we reckon the risks and difficulties of an invasion of Iraq against the risks and difficulties of allowing Saddam to get out of his box and wield weapons of mass destruction—as he is sure to do in a matter of months if we remain on the present course.

A successful invasion of Iraq is certainly not beyond the capacities of the American military. Saddam's conventional forces are weak, demoralized, and probably not very eager to take on American forces again. Remember, it is precisely because of the weakness of his conventional forces that Saddam is so desperate to acquire weapons of mass destruction. The Iraqi army is nothing like what it was in 1990.

As for the problem of gaining international support for an invasion, the United States would probably have a better chance of getting the necessary support from Saudi Arabia if the Saudis knew that this time the Americans were going to finish Saddam off once and for all. The Russians and French would object, but they would also object to futile air-strikes. If we're going to have a breach in the Security Council over Iraq, let's at least have it over a promising military effort rather than a doomed one.

It is true, moreover, for superpowers as well as for dictators that nothing succeeds like success. A successful intervention in Iraq would revolutionize the strategic situation in the Middle East, in ways both tangible and intangible, and all to the benefit of American interests. Continued failure to take such action against Saddam will progressively erode our strategic position and will put the world on notice as the 21st century begins that the Americans, like the French and British of the 1930s, have lost their nerve. ♦

The Making of a Tyrant

By Amatzia Baram

Saddam Hussein is back in the news—and back on the minds of U.S. policymakers, who soon must come to grips with his prolonged defiance. It may be useful, then, to revisit the Iraqi leader and his aspirations. For this is no tinhorn dictator or mere bombastic demagogue, but a thoroughly ruthless and lawless man. The country he commands, moreover, was once the most powerful, and still is potentially the richest, of the Arab nations. His goals are grandiose, his methods unscrupulous; and American policies built on any other assumption are bound to fail.

Clues to the character of Saddam Hussein can be found in his unhappy early years. His family were landless peasants in the small town of Tikrit, about 100 miles north of Baghdad on the Tigris, and for portions of his childhood he lived literally barefoot in a mud hut. Deprivation actually set in before he was born.

Saddam's father died mysteriously a few months before his birth. Then weeks before he was born, his 13-year-old brother died in a Baghdad hospital while undergoing surgery for a brain tumor. His mother, beside herself, tried to abort the child she was carrying, then tried to throw herself under a bus, but was saved. When, despite all, the baby was born, she gave him the unusual name "Saddam," which means "the one who confronts."

The boy was sent to his maternal uncle in Tikrit. Then around the age of two or three, he was returned

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to his mother, when she married and moved to Uja, a tiny backward village nearby. His mother apparently loved him, and he her, but his stepfather mistreated him and always preferred his own children. At 10, Saddam fled their home and returned to his uncle. Saddam himself has described his childhood as dismal. A fatherless boy in a traditional society where fathers were a source not only of status and pride but also of protection, he had to fend for himself from a very early age.

His formal education was skimpy and delayed—a few years of primary school in Tikrit starting when he was 10, and secondary school between the ages of 16 and 24. By his late teens Saddam was living with his uncle in Baghdad and had become the leader of a youth gang. Soon, he and some of his pals moved into the orbit of the clandestine socialist-nationalist Ba'ath party, which found them useful as bully boys. In 1959, when the party turned on the recently installed dictator, Saddam participated in an attempt on the dictator's life and was forced to flee to Egypt. By this time, he had assimilated the lesson that power grows from the barrel of a gun, and he personally carried a loaded revolver under his shirt at all times.

FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ON, SADDAM SEEMS TO HAVE HELD THE CONVICTION THAT TO BE A GREAT HISTORICAL FIGURE IS TO BE A WARRIOR.

Another lesson he acquired early was Arab nationalism and hatred of the West. In 1941, at a time when the German army's eastward advance across North Africa and in the Mediterranean seemed unstoppable, Saddam's uncle, a nationalist army officer, joined in a pro-Nazi revolt against the British, then in control in Iraq. The uprising was quickly put down, and Saddam's uncle was arrested, jailed briefly, and expelled from the army. This bitter experience was not lost on the young Saddam. Both at home and at school, he was drinking in his Arab-Islamic heritage, especially its history of conquest. War heroes like Khalid, al-Qa'qa, and al-Muthanna, who fought under the Prophet Mohammed and his immediate successors; Harun al-Rashid, who ruled the vast and glittering Abbasid empire from Baghdad in the 8th century; and Saladin, born in Saddam's own Tikrit, who defeated the crusaders in Palestine in 1187—all these fired his imagination and filled his emotional world. From elementary school on, he seems to have held the conviction that to be a great historical figure known to every schoolchild throughout the Arab homeland meant, by definition, to be a warrior.

Saddam's difficult background prefigures many patterns and themes of his later life. Thus, his craving for the emblems of accomplishment and the trappings of power seems a reaction against the constricted horizons of his childhood. As he rose in the Ba'ath regime, he had himself awarded an honorary Ph.D. in law, a subject he had scarcely studied. He made up for his lack of military service—a serious handicap in Iraqi political life—by the same expedient: One fine day in 1976, he gave himself the rank of four-star general; then he promoted himself to staff field marshal when he became president, in 1979. He had a set of military uniforms designed for himself that reflect the sunlight in a special way, and when he is photographed among his generals, all wearing ordinary olive garb, he shines like a Mesopotamian god. Indeed, in poems and on posters, he is often portrayed as Tammuz-Dumuzi, the Sumero-Akkadian god of fertility and rebirth.

In addition to the obvious professional risks involved in his job, it seems that the instability of Saddam's early life also feeds his adult obsession with his safety. Unlike some leaders—Indira Gandhi comes to mind—he never allows his sense of invincibility to undermine his personal security. Instead, his safety is his foremost preoccupation, with priority over normal affairs of state. He trusts no one, and any breach of security around him can be punished by death. He sometimes receives dignitaries, even foreign ambassadors, with a loaded revolver on his desk. His bodyguards are frightening characters, most of whom hail from the president's own tribe and are brought to the palace at age 13 to be trained and conditioned. They depend on Saddam, whom they call "our great uncle," for everything, and their loyalty is proverbial. But even they are kept in constant dread lest they make a mistake. They are rarely given a second chance.

Because he sees himself as entirely a self-made man, Saddam feels he owes nothing to anyone. On the contrary, he claims an absolute right to set his own moral code, even to ignore laws he himself has made and the practices of his own party. He alone in the universe is entitled to break promises, while from others, total obedience is exacted. Thus, he singles out for his pathological hatred not ethnic or religious groups like Jews, Kurds, or Shi'ites, but anyone he suspects of harboring ill intent towards him. Such people deserve to die, he feels, and he is willing to have them killed (or even, in a few known cases, to kill them himself) before they have made any move against him. He

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always gets even, a habit that surrounds him with a protective ring of physical fear.

Saddam's brutality, however, is not merely utilitarian. He seems to enjoy taking revenge. He seems to find pleasure in seeing his vanquished enemies suffer and die. He has often used charm to build up alliances, then turned around and stabbed his colleagues in the back. To cite just one example, he had five of his closest associates, men he personally had promoted to top jobs, executed shortly after he became president. Their crime? They had questioned his plan to have himself appointed president and urged him rather to follow the traditional pseudo-democratic procedure of election by the party congress. Saddam ignored their views, had himself appointed, and had the five done away with before they knew what had hit them.

As for the ends to which Saddam so cruelly builds his power, they could hardly be more inflated. Saddam Hussein is a man with a vision. He sees himself leading Iraq to supremacy in the Gulf, then to the "liberation of Palestine" and leadership of the Arab, and eventually the entire Islamic, world. Someday Saddam dreams, his Arab-Islamic empire will be a superpower to rival the United States.

The means for achieving such leadership—thus the key to Iraq's glory—is the fusion of military might, terror, and oil money. The oil wealth of the Gulf states is to fuel his rise, while his weapons of mass destruction, in addition to their purely military potential, are the ideal instrument of terror. This explains why Saddam so fiercely clings to his weapons programs. He learned long ago that by sending terror into the hearts of his opponents, he can paralyze them and bend their will. The method has worked wonders for him inside Iraq, and he believes it will serve him just as well on the international stage.

Saddam, in short, intends to make himself the successor to the "builders and swordsmen" of Mesopotamian and Muslim lore. He dreams of being remembered in history for his colossal construction projects—not just roads, bridges, and electricity grids, but also countless magnificent palaces and a $200-million Cecil B. DeMille remake of ancient Babylon, whose every tenth brick is inscribed, "Babylon was rebuilt in the reign of Saddam Hussein." At horrendous cost, he also has equipped Iraq with military industries unmatched in the Middle East, on which he lavished most of Iraq's oil revenues for a decade. That all this waste has condemned millions of Iraqis to poverty matters little to him: Immortalizing his and Iraq's name is his consuming goal.

How then can he proceed to achieve it, given the strictures of the U.N. sanctions that have hobbled Iraq since the Gulf War? Saddam has shown his limitations in foreign affairs, but also some ability to learn from experience. Even while continually obstructing the U.N.'s arms-monitoring operation, he has maneuvered so as to avoid meaningful U.S. military retaliation since 1993. On a few occasions he has even managed to embarrass Washington. Tactically, he is adept and flexible. But his attachment to his grand vision—and with it, to his weapons of mass destruction—is immutable.

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Were it not for Saddam and his ruling elite, Iraq could have been the Japan of the Arab world. But Saddam values only military glory. Indeed, since 1980 he has rarely been seen out of his field marshal's uniform. After the eight-year Iraq-Iran war, in which Iraq lost at least 300,000 young men and suffered a million wounded, Saddam erected a victory arch in Baghdad. It depicts not wheat sheaves, date palms, and doves of peace, but two huge, crossed stainless-steel swords held by gigantic replicas of Saddam's own hands. The arch towers high above a military parade ground that was inaugurated in August 1989, one year before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

An elementary question for policymakers is whether Saddam can change, whether he could ever be tamed and his regime rendered harmless, even constructive. The answer is clear: There is no sign that change is possible—nothing whatever to counterbalance the crushing weight of his consistently brutal ways. Instead, all the evidence confirms the continuity of his career. Consider two episodes that took place two decades apart.

In the mid-1970s, Saddam received a request from the mayor of Baghdad, the very uncle who had reared him and whose daughter by then was Saddam's wife. This uncle sought the president's pardon for an elderly friend who wanted to return to Iraq from political exile. The uncle vouched for his childhood friend's good behavior, and Saddam granted the pardon—only to have the old man shot on the spot when he crossed into Iraq.

Twenty years later, in December 1995, Saddam extended an official pardon to his defector-cousin and son-in-law, four-star general Husayn Kamil. Gen. Kamil returned to Iraq from Jordan. Two days later, he and most of his family were dead. ♦

MEDISCARE, AGAIN: A CLINTON DOUBLE CROSS

By Major Garrett

Speaking of Bill Clinton's power to seduce: He is luring the GOP Congress into surrender on Medicare.

The 1997 budget deal contained an implicit promise from Clinton and the Democrats to observe a truce on this issue—no tricks, no campaign-trail taunts. And implausible as it seemed, Republicans fell for this seduction, forgetting how Democrats have used Medicare as a tire iron against them in every election since 1980, forgetting how Clinton had deceived them in the 1995 budget negotiations, forgetting how he and other Democrats had blatantly lied about Republican plans for Medicare.

In the '97 budget deal, Clinton and Congress agreed to trim future Medicare expenses by $115 billion over five years and to convene a bipartisan commission to handle the issue. The deal appeared to offer full political cover in 1998: a moratorium on attacks against imaginary Medicare cuts, plus a boring commission that would stifle volatile debate about Medicare's future. (The program is headed toward insolvency in 2007.)

Then came the double cross. The president announced this month his intention to offer Medicare coverage to a group of people called the "near-elderly," a small cohort of Americans (fewer than 14 percent of the general population, according to the Census Bureau) who, for various reasons, cannot obtain health insurance. Clinton intends to allow all Americans aged 62 to 64 to buy into Medicare for $300 a month. And he wants to charge the unemployed who are 55 and older $400 a month for the same privilege.

"They came back from the budget deal with a flimsy piece of paper on Medicare," says one Republican strategist. "The leadership has been Neville Chamberlained." Clinton's proposal is indeed as shrewd a trap as he has laid on Medicare—far shrewder than the ostensible cease-fire he offered last year.

To begin with, the Clinton proposal makes Medicare an issue once again, with mid-term elections looming. Already, Republicans are girding for Medicare attacks in congressional districts where they

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had counted on a free pass. This doesn't mean those candidates will lose; but it does mean Republicans will have to raise more money and devote more time to building a rhetorical defense, which will distract them from, among other things, pushing for tax cuts.

Republicans who believe that Clinton's Medicare parry is merely a sop to his disgruntled Left are deluding themselves. As senior presidential adviser Rahm Emanuel explained it to the *New York Times*, "The Republicans want to talk numbers. We will talk about individual real-life stories. And we will keep pounding the Republicans until Congress approves our proposal." It appears that Clinton wants a year-long debate on Medicare as the rescuer of 300,000 or so distressed "near-elderly."

His transparent goal is to force Republicans into ritualistic denunciations of Medicare expansion. And Senators Trent Lott and Phil Gramm have already obliged. The terms of the debate are thus established: Clinton is compassionate; Republicans are not. The president will hammer this theme in his State of the Union address—he now has more incentive to do so than ever—and Democrats in the House chamber will thunderously applaud. (What Republicans will do, we can only imagine: hiss? scowl?)

THE PRESIDENT'S TRANSPARENT GOAL IS TO FORCE REPUBLICANS INTO RITUALISTIC DENUNCIATIONS OF MEDICARE EXPANSION.

Though objections to Clinton's proposal are mathematically foolproof, they are politically problematic. Gramm correctly points out that those willing to pay annual premiums of more than $3,600 for Medicare are probably facing serious health costs—otherwise it would make no sense for them to pay so much for an annual check-up and flu shot. He and others argue that these new recipients will consume far more health care than they pay for. "Any time you expand an entitlement, the costs go up," says Rep. Dan Miller, a Florida Republican and party leader on Medicare.

Moreover, to encourage people to retire before age 65 is to aggravate the problems of both Medicare and Social Security, which feed off payroll taxes of 15.4 percent. Also, an extension of Medicare coverage could lead the private sector to dump some of its "near-eligible" employees from its health-insurance rolls. Last, if Republicans ever concede that the "near-eligible" need help in obtaining coverage, Democrats will demand subsidies for the unemployed 55 and older and those 62 to 64 who can't afford Clinton's pricey premiums. This would further drive up Medicare costs and accelerate the program's grim march toward insolvency. But, for the Democratic party, it would be mighty good politics.

Despite the testimony that objective health-care experts have already given—testimony that validates GOP objections—many Republicans are fearful that voters will dismiss such criticism as "green-eyeshade Republicanism" and warm to Clinton's promise of guaranteed health coverage.

"I don't delude myself into not believing that the president's proposal will be very, very popular," Gramm says. But so far, a politically nimble response to Clinton has not emerged. Rep. Dennis Hastert of Illinois is in charge of assembling a task force on the subject. Some strategists are pushing for a replay of the "government takeover of health care" mantra used in 1994 against ClintonCare. But that won't do. Clinton's current proposal isn't nearly as big as Hillary's sprawling dreams, and he has the fig-leaf of premiums to argue that he's being fiscally responsible.

No, Republicans need to come up with a plan of their own. They might call for (1) an expansion of Medical Savings Accounts, (2) tax breaks for individuals who buy their own health care (similar to those corporations now receive), and (3) flexibility in portability laws, allowing individuals to purchase high-deductible health coverage when they change jobs. All three of these counter-proposals would give individuals more power to shop for their own health care and seek prices and coverage that fit their needs.

Clinton is betting that Republicans won't marshal such arguments and that they will instead put up a meager defense until the political tide becomes irreversible, after which they will capitulate. It is, sad to say, a tried and true formula for the president. But this time, Republicans should stiffen their spines: If they fail to mount a strong, market-oriented campaign against the Clinton gambit, they will not only jeopardize Medicare's future, they will have foreclosed any possibility of privatizing Social Security. After all, if you can't make a case for privatizing Medicare (where anxiety over insolvency is relatively high), how can you expect to make a case for privatizing Social Security (where anxiety over insolvency does not exist)?

Clinton is eager to debate the future of Social Security shortly after the 1998 elections. If he cows the Republicans on Medicare, he will surely find them a soft, trembling foe in the next round. ♦

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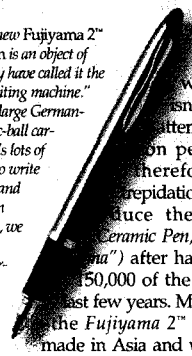

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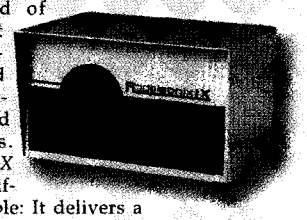

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Speaking of the Dead

The Obituary and Death's Other Terrors

By Joseph Epstein

It's almost always a mistake not to speak of the dead, especially when one has good things to say. I passed up a chance to do so a while back, and I continue to regret it. An acquaintance—one on the cusp of becoming a friend—died in his middle sixties. He was a widower and a painter, an abstract expressionist, who lived in the same building I do and earned his living as a designer—chiefly, of children's toys. He was a quiet man, but he liked a joke, and whenever I ran into him in our building or the neighborhood I made it a point to tell him one. There was nothing of the show-off about him, and it was only gradually, after innumerable meetings, that I learned how much he knew: about jazz, about classical music, about modern literature. He was impressive in his gentle understatedness.

A few weeks after he died, a memorial service was held in an art gallery with perhaps a hundred people present. No music was played, and the element of religion—he was apparently a thoroughly secularized Jew—was entirely absent. Someone played the master of ceremonies. Seven or eight people were designated to speak. Two of them read utterly negligible poems. Old friends told amusing stories, many of them about his ability to stand aside and coolly view scenes of domestic chaos. A few spoke of his earlier, bohemian days as a painter.

Listening to all this, I felt no one had come close to capturing his quality. This was an elegant and serious man, and no one seemed to have noticed, or at least thought it worth mentioning. The master of ceremonies, who wished to give the evening something of a therapeutic note, invited everyone in the audience to speak. I thought of doing so and then—out of a slight nervousness? out of fear of seeming unauthentic? out of a worry that it was not my place to do so?—decided not to. Whenever I think about him now, I feel a slight stab of guilt.

Illustrations by Peter Steiner

When my mother died, I felt I had to speak. The rabbi officiating at her funeral service simply did not know her well enough to talk about her in a penetrating or even mildly interesting way. When he did speak, it was, alas, in clichés of the sort that give no comfort. Whether I gave comfort to anyone other than myself I do not know, but I am pleased to have spoken about the extraordinary woman who was my mother.

I also once spoke at the memorial service of an older friend who I thought had a splendid gift for enjoying life: He loved travel, food and drink, the company of elegant women. He had as a son-in-law a rather dour clergyman for whom my friend's gift seemed a dubious one, and as it turned out, the son-in-law spoke less in clichés than in generalities: about the attractions of death, chiefly. He might have been talking about anyone, but certainly not about the remarkable man who was his father-in-law.

I was asked to speak at a memorial service for my friend Erich Heller, the literary critic, a man of great good humor, powerful learning, and more than a touch of intellectual snobbery. When I saw the program for the ser-

Joseph Epstein is the author of Life Sentences, *a collection of literary essays recently published by W. W. Norton.*

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vice, I could not but note that, of the five speakers, two were men whom Erich found, as he might have said, clownish in their pretensions and non-existent in their intellectual qualities. If people do spin in their graves, then as the pair spoke—solipsistically and clownishly—about him, Erich must have been spinning in his.

I later learned that both these men had put themselves forward; they had not been asked but offered to speak. An axiom in these matters is that you never allow anyone to speak at a memorial service who too insistently offers, for he will almost certainly speak about himself, which is what these two men did, over, you might say, Erich's dead body. One of these men has since died, and a friend of mine has exacted from me the promise that the other not be permitted to speak at his memorial service, should he predecease me.

The memorial service is rather like "live" television—anything can happen, everything go wrong. I recall such a service for a Chicago publisher who had what I thought a needlessly complex sense of humor: quippy, overly ironic, frequently inappropriate, generally missing its target. Five of the six people asked to speak all emphasized the poor man's sense of humor, furnishing, as I recall, no examples. (It was dangerously reminiscent of the joke about the funeral service for the man about whom no one has a good word. Finally, a man gets up to speak, clears his throat, and announces, "His brother was even worse.") Only the publisher's son saved the day by speaking about the man's genuine goodness as a father.

Recollection of such events is enough to turn one's attention to one's own memorial service—or, given the possibilities for minor disaster, to the question of whether one wishes to have such a service at all. I can think of three people I shouldn't mind speaking about me at such a service: one with a reputation for truth-telling, one with a fine ebullience whose comments are certain to remind any audience of life's delights, and one of whose love I am certain. I suppose I ought to make a note of this, and, while I am at it, choose the music I should like to have played: Mozart, Borodin, Ravel. Then again perhaps it might be better to forget the whole thing and instead leave a few thousand dollars to throw a party at which the word "death" is not permitted. This was what Randolph Churchill, son of Winston, instructed his heirs to arrange:

> I desire that my corpse shall be disposed of either in the churchyard of East Berghold or in the gardens of Stour [his home], as speedily as possible and with the least inconvenience to other people or expense to my Estate. Any of my friends who care to attend my sepulture shall be entertained to baked meats and a cold collation at Stour and drink anything that may happen to be in my house. There shall be no memorial services. Bones (not my own) shall be provided for my dogs and bitches; but steps must be taken that the bones shall not be bones of contention nor treated like those of Jezebel.

"Of all the things in the world I think the least about," allowed Bernard B. Jacobs, in his day one of the two powers in the theater-owning and play-producing Shubert Organization, "it's what happens after you die. Dead is dead." Jacobs, who died in 1996 at the age of eighty, was nonetheless ushered out with a long obituary in the *New York Times* that spoke in a flattering way about his lack of pretentiousness. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, judged in the light of eternity, making a fuss over the dead doesn't seem to make much sense.

Quite right—and yet, and yet. . . . One cannot help imagining what the world will make of one after one has shuffled off to some place rather distant from Buffalo. One knows justice is limited in life, but is it any greater afterwards? Perhaps, but not, as a reader of obituaries I have come to suspect, immediately afterwards.

In his foreword to *The Last Word*, a collection of fairly recent obituaries from the *New York Times*, Russell Baker writes that "the obituaries are best left until last." They are the first thing I turn to in the *New York Times*; and, in fact, if it weren't for the obituaries, I probably wouldn't read the daily *Times* at all. Not that the obituaries are all that grand, but they do at least let me know who has been taken out of the game from those leagues—the arts, scholarship, intellectual life—in which I have an interest.

Sometimes the obits provide charming surprises. I like especially the modest ones. "Francine Katzenbogen, 51; Gave Cats the Lap of Luxury." Or: "Adelma Grenier Simmons, 93, Authority on Herbs, Is Dead." Or again: "Eldon W. Lyle, 89, a Fighter of Diseases Affecting Roses." And I seem to have kept the obit of a few years back whose headline read, "David Fleay, 85, Whose Specialty Was the Platypus." "Rest," I found myself muttering after reading it, "in Platypus."

For many years obituaries in the *New York Times* were written by Alden Whitman—the Angel of Death, as I came to think him—and most seemed to me perfunctory and some badly politicized (Whitman was a man of the Left). I don't recall if any of his obituaries were actually vengeful, but if they were it would not have been the first time that people have used the obituary as a weapon to kick an enemy who was already down. When the famous (in his day) agnostic Robert Ingersoll died, one newspaper couldn't resist noting: "Robert Ingersoll died yesterday. Perhaps he knows better now."

In recent years, however, the obituaries have improved as the *Times* began to interest itself in people whose lives had a charming oddity—people who did good works anonymously (a man who gave away gloves to the homeless), or invented things that you would have thought came

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into being on their own (the inventors of the Rolodex and the zoot suit, the designer of the Corvette, the promoter of the New York Marathon, the coach who started the huddle in football), or had a slightly silly success ("Bob Wilvers, 65, Ad Executive Put 'Plop, Plop' with 'Fizz, Fizz' in an old Alka-Selzer Commercial"), or had fleeting fame (the little boy for whom Babe Ruth promised to hit a home run in 1926), and so on.

In death as in life, luck is an element. I seem to remember that the novelist John Dos Passos's obituary was demoted in importance because he happened to die on the same day as the Egyptian political leader Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser. The *New York Times* nowadays tries, insofar as is in its power, to make death seem comprehensive through its selection of obits (a word that sounds, as Thomas Mallon recently noted, like a snack food). On a characteristic day—Sunday, January 4, 1998, for example—it ran obituaries of a master grower of bonsai trees, a Green Beret leader in Vietnam, a former football coach at Rutgers, and the mayor of Scottsdale, Arizona, during the town's period of greatest growth.

Almost by their nature, obituaries tend to be skeletal (some metaphors are impossible to pass up). Usually not all that much space is provided: T. S. Eliot's Prufrock may have measured life with coffee spoons, but death is measured out in column inches. Facts must be fitted in, economical use of anecdotes and quotations made, and on to the next corpse. The *Times* generally assigns its obits to writers specializing in the deceased's own specialty: art critics on artists, military writers on generals, and so forth. But I have noted an interesting general-assignment obituary writer with the somewhat overloaded name of Robert McG. Thomas, Jr., who occasionally gets beyond the facts and the rigid formula of the obit to touch on—of all things to find in the *New York Times*—a deeper truth. Thus Thomas on one Fred Rosenstiel, "who spent his life planting gardens to brighten the lives of his fellow New Yorkers, and to alleviate an abiding sadness in his heart, died at Western Queens Community Hospital in Astoria. He was eighty-three." The sadness, we learn later in the obituary, derived from Mr. Rosenstiel's inability to "forgive himself for surviving the Holocaust, friends said." A fine touch.

If one reads the obituaries with a relieved sense of "there but for the grace of God go I (since I'm damn far from ready to go)," one also, as one grows older, tends to be dismayed by the deaths of people one's own age or even younger. Now that I have hit sixty, I find it much more comforting to begin a day in which the obituary page lists three people who died in their nineties and one who made it to 105. It cheered me to read about "Gamblin' Rose Hamburger, a race track handicapper who beat all the odds by living to 105, precisely." On the other, sadder hand, William Vickrey, who won a Nobel Prize in economics in 1996, died, at eighty-two, three days after his prize was announced, which must have been extremely irritating.

Henry James somewhere says that, after the age of fifty, someone one knows dies every day. Not quite true, but nearly so: If one does not know the person who has died, one knows someone who knew him. Sometimes one is visited, in the obits, by figures out of one's past. On January 2, I read, "Richard Elman, Novelist, Poet and Teacher, Is Dead at 63." I knew Dick Elman in the early 1960s. He was afire with literary ambition in those days. It never worked out. He had, to begin with, the bad luck to have the same name (one "l" and one "n" short) as Richard Ellmann, the biographer of James Joyce and Yeats and Oscar Wilde, and those who didn't simply confuse the two tended to compare them—not to Dick Elman's favor. He was leftist when I knew him, but the political element evidently grew stronger in him, so that, in his obituary, it is mentioned that he "described himself as a Socialist." His books never received much in the way of serious attention; and as he grew older, his publishers grew more obscure. He picked up teaching jobs at different universities. His first marriage went sour, he contracted another, had a daughter from each. The obit's photograph shows a man in dishevelment, bald with unruly long hair on the sides, squinting into the sun. Not an easy life, my guess is, with a higher than the normal quotient of disappointment.

Am I reading too much into Dick Elman's obituary? Perhaps. But obit-

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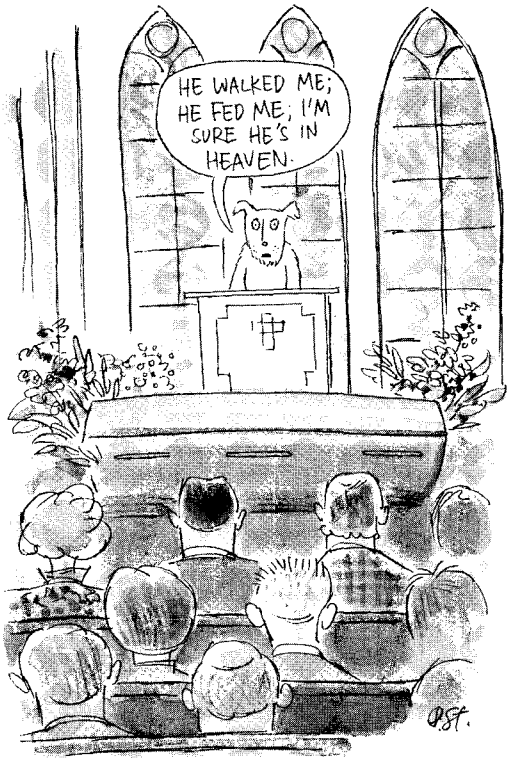
uaries, which tend to summarize a life, also call out for such judgments. Sometimes they do this more quietly than at other times. The phrase "There are no known survivors" at the close of an obituary invariably suggests sadness to me. Reading the obituary of the Beat Generation figure Herbert Huncke—a man whose life was filled with drug addiction, petty crime, and squalor of various sorts ("he sold drugs at times and himself at others," his obit notes)—one wonders about the reaction of his sole survivor, "his half brother, Dr. Brian Huncke of Chicago." One remembers, too, that such lives, good copy though they make for the obituarist, represent vast heartbreak for their families.

Reading obituaries, one cannot help wondering about one's own. Will it appear at all? How many factual errors will it have? Will it contain something really stupid, as did a recent obituary of the Sicilian writer Danilo Dolci, who is described as "the Studs Terkel of Sicily" because he once produced a book of interviews? How brief will it be? (A woman calls the newspaper to place an obituary notice for her recently deceased husband and is told that they charge by the word. "Very well," she says, "I'd like it to read, 'Schwartz dead.'" The minimum fee, she is told, is $50 and for that you get five words. "Very well," she says, "make it, 'Schwartz dead. Cadillac for sale.'")

These are not questions that torture me as I try to sleep, but rather ones I think about from time to time when reading about the deaths of others. Besides, I am confident that, whatever might be written about me, I would be sure to find it inadequate. I hope its writer at least has the common decency to begin my obit, "Joseph Epstein, the writer whose works held great appeal to a small but select audience of highly cultivated readers, died last night of natural causes, a great-grandchild on his lap, while listening to the Schubert Octet in F Major. He was ninety-seven and in full possession of his faculties. Known for his suavity and charm, his penetrating intellect and amusing subtlety, Epstein. . . ."

Writing one's own obituary reminds me of the only story I know about an obituarist, "The Cemetery," by J. C. Squire. In the story, a poet accepts a job in the obituary department at what must be the *Times* of London. Out of a natural curiosity, he checks the files for his own obituary and finds it all too brief and disappointing. So he adds a bit to it, and then, on other occasions, he adds more—in fact, quite a bit more, so that it eventually puffs up into a major article. Then one day he gets a bad conscience about what he has done and cuts his obituary back to the bone—making it even briefer than he originally found it. Feeling better, he goes off to lunch and, crossing the street, is hit by a car and instantly killed. The obituary is printed in its drastically cut version and generates outrage at what is felt to be the vast injustice visited upon the poet. His work is revived, his reputation restored, and his life proves posthumously a great success.



The editor of *The Last Word*, Marvin Siegel, closes his collection of obituaries on a thumping ironic note. The last five obituaries he reprints include one of a Brooklyn restaurant owner who was famous for his artery-clogging cheese cake but who himself lived till ninety-two; a seven-year-old girl who died piloting her own plane; a woman who lived a thousand days longer than she wished and had to undergo the full horror of life in a nursing home; a sixteen-year-old girl shot by a boy who didn't like the way she looked at him; and an account of burial at the potter's field on Hart Island outside New York City.

The point is, I assume, that the ugly customer, as Hazlitt referred to death, or the eternal Footman, as T. S. Eliot called him, isn't very discriminating in his choice of victims.

In his great book, *The Ancient City*, Fustel de Coulanges writes about the founding of Greek cities around the gravesites of ancestors and reminds us how much of life in the ancient world was organized around the dead: "All antiquity," de Coulanges writes, "was persuaded that without burial the soul was miserable, and that by burial it became forever happy. It was not to display their grief that they performed the funeral ceremony, it was for the rest and happiness of the dead." Maintenance of the gravesites, including elaborate rituals for remembering and even attempting to feed the dead, were central to the lives of the living.

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Today, almost all the old pieties toward the dead have been vastly attenuated. Great numbers of people nowadays are cremated and do not even have graves. Church-going appears to be less, and so—even when his family wishes to have religious funerary rites—more often than not the clergy do not really know the deceased and have nothing of note to say about him. Most people under fifty do not own graves for their own burial, in the way that earlier generations did; the majority assume, I take it, that they probably will not die in the city in which they currently live, but instead in—who knows?—California, Tuscany, or Paris. All this has made speaking well of the dead more significant than ever.

At a higher level than the obituarist is the memorialist, who writes under less pressure and usually at greater length. Unlike the obituarist, the memorialist may linger over the mysteries of character, attempting to tighten up loose screws, ravel back unraveled edges, explain the hitherto inexplicable—attempt, in short, to make sense of the life of the person who has died. Isaiah Berlin, who himself recently died, did this very well. Thus far no one has provided a similar service for him, and most of what has been written about him has seemed exaggerated. Exaggeration is one of the great, perhaps the greatest, traps awaiting anyone who writes or speaks about the dead. The point is nicely made by the best joke I have ever heard about memorial services.

This is the joke about a Mr. Nussbaum, who comes to his rabbi to announce that his beloved dog Buster has just died and that he would be grateful if the rabbi would say a memorial service for the dog. The rabbi, after expressing his condolences, tells Mr. Nussbaum that Jews are not permitted to say memorial services for animals. Mr. Nussbaum informs the rabbi that he has no other family, that Buster meant everything to him, that he would be willing to make a serious contribution to the rabbi's special fund for working with inner-city children if he would accommodate him here. The rabbi, not an inflexible man, tells Mr. Nussbaum that, all right, he will do the service for Buster on the next day in the small synagogue at 2:30. And the following day, the rabbi goes through the service and speaks about the dog for roughly fifteen minutes. Mr. Nussbaum, alone in the audience, listens, tears in his eyes. When it is over, he approaches the rabbi, hands him a check for $5,000, and says: "Rabbi, I shall always be grateful to you for what you did for me and for Buster. It meant the world to me. And what you said about my beloved dog moved me greatly. Do you know, Rabbi, till this afternoon I had no idea how much Buster had done for Israel."

To have died without anyone's having captured the combination of one's idiosyncrasies, or understood the inner drama of one's life, seems a profound sadness. Lady Murasaki, in *The Tale of Genji*, notes that novels get written because "the storyteller's own experience of men and things . . . has moved him to an emotion so passionate that he can no longer keep it shut up in his heart."

Our experience of dead family and friends above all must not be kept shut up in the heart. We owe it to the dead and to ourselves to tell their story, to get it as straight as possible, to pass it along with sympathy reinforced by a dedication to truth. It is crucial that the last word not be—like that of Mr. Nussbaum's rabbi—a shabby, foolish, or false word. ♦

FROM JERUSALEM TO BABYLON AND BACK AGAIN

Fundamentalism & the Twentieth Century

By Richard J. Mouw

As conventional wisdom had it at the time, Protestant fundamentalism was dead by the end of the 1920s. The fundamentalists—so labeled because of their passionate defense of what they considered the "fundamentals" of Christianity (such as the divinity of Christ, his virgin birth and bodily resurrection, and other miraculous elements in the biblical record)—had struggled for several decades against "modernizing" tendencies in mainline Protestantism, and they had at last lost the battle. Their efforts to gain control of denominational seminaries and missionary agencies had failed, and one of their most visible champions, William Jennings Bryan, had suffered humiliation in the infamous Scopes "monkey trial" in 1925.

But somehow, twenty years later, the fundamentalist cause turned out to have stayed very much alive. The most obvious sign of its vitality was the emerging career of the young evangelist Billy Graham, who conducted much-publicized rallies in Los Angeles and Boston in 1949 and 1950. Several prominent athletes, Hollywood personalities, and even organized-crime figures announced their conversions to evangelical Christianity, and William Randolph Hearst issued to his newspapers one of his last and most famous edicts—reading, in its entirety: "Puff Graham."

Richard J. Mouw is president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

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What happened between 1930 and 1950 to bring about this utterly unpredicted revival of fundamentalism's fortunes? In his new study, *Revive Us Again*, Joel Carpenter offers a compelling and convincing narrative of those two decades. Picking up where George Marsden left off in his magisterial 1980 study, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*, Carpenter's book deserves to join Marsden's on any short list of major works in American religious history.

Like Marsden, Carpenter sees fundamentalists as full of "paradoxical tensions," not the least of which is their understanding of their place in American culture. Deeply embedded in the fundamentalists' collective psyche is the Puritan notion of America as divinely appointed among the nations. But the nineteenth-century crisis over Darwin—together with the (not unrelated) increase in the influence of secularism in American public life—created a strong sense of cultural transition that, as Marsden argued, was not unlike an immigrant experience: a migration not of themselves but of the world around them, until evangelical Protestants in the twentieth century felt themselves gradually and mysteriously transported from the holy land of America, the New Israel, to the accursed land of America, the New Babylon.

The battles against theological modernism during the first years of this century only served to reinforce this mood of cultural pessimism. Having lost the struggle for their own mainline denominations, the fundamentalists came to see themselves even in the larger culture as a "remnant": the faithful minority who possessed "prophetic" knowledge of the world's descent into doom and certain damnation. The only hope for the future was the ushering in of a supernaturally initiated millennial Kingdom, and in the meantime the faithful remnant must concentrate on the spiritual rescue of the lost and the spiritual nurture of the faithful.

Much of Carpenter's narrative focuses on the intricate subculture the fundamentalists constructed to implement their mission. Even while the secularizing elites smugly assumed that "the old-time religion" was a thing of the past, the fundamentalists were building a massive network of independent organizations: youth ministries, evangelizing teams, Bible institutes, seminaries, missionary agencies, summer Bible conferences, Bible distribution societies, and so on. These organizations were theologically eclectic: advocates of the "Old Princeton" brand of Presbyterian Calvinism, for instance, managed to cooperate both with the relatively atheological pragmatists (who thought the only important thing was to "get the message out") and with the strictest dispensational theologians (who held the utter necessity for a theologically correct "Bible prophecy" form of faith). This subculture proved surprisingly transdenominational, with participants representing the newer independent "Bible churches" as well as pockets of conservatism within the more established bodies of fundamentalism.

Joel Carpenter
Revive Us Again
The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism
Oxford University Press, 384 pp., $30

During the first half of the twentieth century—while the fundamentalists were building their grassroots networks—the mainline Protestant bodies seemed content to maintain the more traditional denominational patterns they had won from the fundamentalists in the battles over modernism: Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Lutheran, Methodist, etc. Their own efforts at creating interdenominational organizations aimed primarily at creating high-level "national councils of churches"—far less meaningful and, it would turn out, less powerful than the fundamentalists' local networks. (When it comes down to getting ordinary church folks from different denominations actually to cooperate in common projects, Billy Graham's crusades and the evangelical Gideon Bible-distribution projects are far more "ecumenical" than most mainline denominational projects that carry that label.)

In all of this, the liberals proved oblivious to the fact that they were being outflanked by the backwoods theological opponents they thought they had defeated long before. As Carpenter puts it, although the process was not very visible for several decades, the fundamentalists were helping to create "a major shift among the basic institutional carriers of American religious life." The results are quite obvious today: the mainline "denominations have been losing members, income, and influence while special-purpose, nondenominational religious agencies have grown, multiplied, and taken on increasing importance in shaping and carrying people's religious identity." Carpenter underscores the irony in this situation. Forced by the Protestant establishment to move to the margins, the fundamentalists guaranteed their own survival by initiating "a trend that has led to the weakening of the most central and powerful corporate expressions of American religion."

Most scholars and social commentators missed these dynamics, and they still fail to comprehend similar developments today. The common pattern, for example, of treating the Promise Keepers simply as a throwback to patriarchy ignores the fact that it is an important transdenominational religious movement that utilizes a powerful grassroots religious communications system. A key weakness in the reigning perspective on such things, Carpenter argues, is the unquestioned assumption that "modernization always produces secular-

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ization." To challenge this presupposition is to consider the possibility that fundamentalism is in fact one very successful strategy for adapting to modernity. Fundamentalists have never failed to take advantage of the new: Carpenter provides much evidence of their creative use of radio broadcasting, and a similar story can also be told of more recent ventures in "televangelism."

Such use of new technologies to spread old religion is not so much an irony of fundamentalism as an astonishingly clear illustration of its paradoxical tensions. When fundamentalists feel marginalized, they draw upon a rich store of theological and spiritual resources for interpreting their social location in "remnant" terms. But they never really lose the deep hope that they might somehow rescue the culture itself. "Revival" is always at least a distant possibility in the fundamentalist scheme, and at the first hint of an opportunity to exercise cultural influence, the revivalist motif again becomes dominant—with a concomitant retrieval of those "chosen nation" themes that had been suppressed during more pessimistic times. In giving us a better understanding of the complexities of fundamentalists' cultural self-understanding, Carpenter provides some helpful insights into the American experience as such.

The provost at the evangelical Calvin College in Michigan, Carpenter is a reliable and insightful guide to these shiftings, and he is candid about his own affection for fundamentalism. He looks at the movement from the perspective of an evangelical who wants to honor its strengths while exploring its weaknesses. And in making his case he is not afraid to aim a few critical arrows at his fellow "post-fundamentalist" evangelicals.

The attitude of "post-fundamentalism" has been around for some time—a sort of imagining among certain evangelicals that their own prior generations of theologians and churchgoers have become an embarrassment to them. In the 1950s, for instance, Edward John Carnell—a leader among the "new evangelicals" who chided their fundamentalist forebears for anti-intellectualism and "other-worldliness"—labeled fundamentalism "orthodoxy gone cultic" and spoke disparagingly of the pettiness of the movement's attitudes and legalisms.

What Carpenter rightly sees is an element naiveté embodied in such criticisms, whether made in the 1950s or today. All religious movements that accomplish something important are necessarily "cultic," and Carnell and his colleagues failed to acknowledge that in their efforts to improve on what the older fundamentalists had done, they were making use of the very subculture that they were attempting to alter. "Fundamentalism was often intellectually lame, provincial, petty, mean-spirited, stultifying and manipulative," as Carpenter puts it, "but it could be enabling and energizing as well, and by the 1940s it had produced a restive and visionary younger generation."

Revive Us Again reminds us that those "who chide a prior generation for not seeing its own foibles and limitations should know that some day their descendants will say the same of them." But Carpenter is not content simply to have us tolerate the fundamentalists' shortcomings without also recognizing their very real strengths.

They nurtured, he tells us, "their own visions of duty and opportunity. They were able to create close-knit and supportive fellowships. They had plenty of outlets for inventiveness and entrepreneurial expansion, and they enjoyed life-changing religious experiences that came to them in forms and language they had fashioned."

In a time when "fundamentalist" is often used as a convenient vilification by those who take delight in disparaging any strong religious conviction, Carpenter gives us rea-

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son to hope that the fundamentalists will have many more reawakenings.

To lose their passionate witness would be, for those of us who believe in such things, an inestimable injury to the health of our immortal souls. But it would also be, regardless of one's religious beliefs, a terrible hurt to the soul of America—that nation called to righteousness, that city on a hill, that almost chosen people. ♦

GRANDE DAME TERRIBLE

The Young Tigress of the Piano Combs Gray Hair

By Jay Nordlinger

That brilliant, appalling, and unignorable pianist, Martha Argerich, will always be thought of as a young tigress: her hair tumbling down her back, her shoulders hunched, her eyes blazing—as though she would rather devour the keyboard than play it. Many critics consider her the greatest living pianist, and all of them recognize her as a "force of nature" (to use their unavoidable phrase). Her fans are shockingly passionate, even by the standards of the concert hall: They hang on her every note, convinced that she is endowed with magic and plays the piano as no one has played it before.

The young tigress, however, is now fifty-six years old, and in recent months, her record label, Deutsche Grammophon, has reissued several of her most popular albums—perhaps in acknowledgement that its bad girl is graying. Can the *enfant terrible* turn *grande dame*? Or is there such a thing as the *grande dame terrible*? These recordings, chiefly of Romantic piano concertos, reveal Argerich both as she was and as she remains, and they will keep her legend alive long after she has retired.

That legend began early, when Argerich was a girl in Buenos Aires. Visiting pianists from Europe would be taken to marvel at the young wonder, and in 1955, when she was fourteen, one of them, Friedrich Gulda, took her to Vienna to become his student. Two years later, Argerich won a pair of the most prestigious competitions in music: the Busoni and the Geneva. In 1960, her debut album provoked gasps around the world: She may have lacked musical depth, but her fingers were fantastic, flying across the piano with rare accuracy and confidence. But then she suddenly suspended her performing career, preferring to study without distraction. And when she re-emerged in 1965, at age twenty-four, to win the Chopin competition in Warsaw, her stardom was assured.

During her five years away from public view, Argerich was the protégée of Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, one of music's most notorious eccentrics. He must have influenced the young woman profoundly, for she resembles him in numerous ways. A freewheeling pianist given to fanciful (if often persuasive) interpretations, Michelangeli had enormous technical ability: The French master Alfred Cortot, on first hearing him, cried, "A new Liszt is born!" Michelangeli, however, was too troubled—too strange, really—to enjoy a normal career. He played infrequently and tended to cancel the concerts he did schedule. He was startlingly inconsistent, performing gloriously one night, abominably the next. Preferring to sleep all day and practice all night, he proved mystifying as a teacher: His students were often tied in knots, uncertain how to please him. But he did have undeniable genius to impart, and his progeny—including the redoubtable Maurizio Pollini—all play well, if with excessive abandon and muscularity.

Argerich, too, is a loner, one who schedules only a handful of concerts and cancels them with something like predictability. (So unreliable is she that many musical organizations refuse to book her at all, much as they would welcome the ticket sales.) She is a zealous guardian of her privacy, granting virtually no interviews, which only adds to her allure. Deutsche Grammophon, for its part, pleads with her to enter the studio for a few more pressings, but Argerich imperiously declines, not needing the money, the attention, or the professional satisfaction.

The company has sent to the stores a boxed set of eight concertos. The first is the Beethoven C Major, an excellent test of any pianist's worth. Here, Argerich is deplorable: lawless with her tempos, offensive in her phrasing, and altogether a nuisance. Her tone is brittle and blunt, and she is constitutionally opposed to rounding an edge.

And yet, typically, she is not quite a failure: The first movement has a jaunty power, and, as always, there is an electricity behind her playing. Her scales are tight and controlled, and she makes sensibly spare use of the sustaining pedal. While aggressive, she stops just short of brutality. She is willful and impetuous with the music, but we continue to listen, if only to discover what the next outrage will be.

The opening of the second movement, surprisingly, is almost limpid. But Argerich soon lapses into her customary thumping and compromises the Largo's loveliness. The rondo—a fleet, delightful creation—

Jay Nordlinger, associate editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *writes regularly on classical music.*

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she stabs at, as though angry with it. Her playing is crisp and precise, but it lacks grace, and she is prone to quick, unmusical crescendos (annoying bursts of sound that Beethoven did not intend and would not condone). And her specialty—in every sort of music, but especially that of the Classical period—is the misaccented note, which badly distorts the line. Argerich never allows us to forget she is there, never permits Beethoven to step forward. She ends her portion of the rondo with an exaggerated ritardando, spoiling the conclusion that the composer has planned.

In the Chopin E-minor concerto—which ought to be her bread and butter—Argerich is even worse. Her opening chord, which should be a firm, authoritative statement, is instead a violent assault. When she introduces the movement's principal theme, she does not sing (as a properly lyrical pianist would), but produces a metallic, distasteful sound. At times, she merely slaps at the keys, neglecting to play into them. This is a bravura piece, to be sure, but also a poetic one—and Argerich treats it as an excuse for exhibitionism. Even when she should luxuriate, she hurries past. She can jolt and electrify an audience, but seldom does she melt one. And when she reaches the madly virtuosic coda that concludes the first movement, she deprives us of its thrill—precisely because the speed and fervor the coda requires she has been using throughout.

Elsewhere in the boxed set, however, Argerich is commendable, even exemplary—as with Michelangeli, much seems to depend on the alignment of the planets. She gives a solid account of the Schumann concerto, including its Intermezzo, which, though simple, is easy to ruin. She rips through the final Allegro with more force than is traditional, but it proves justifiable, and she is sympathetically supported by her woefully underrated conductor, Mstislav Rostropovich.

The Liszt E-flat concerto, meanwhile, is a bombastic, overwrought work, unabashedly a showpiece conceived for the showiest pianist of them all—the composer himself. Liszt would have liked Martha Argerich (for more reasons than one), and she makes for his concerto the strongest possible case. Ferocity, explosiveness, and speed become this work as they do few others: It is a beast of a piece, and it calls for a beast of a pianist.

So too the Prokofiev C Major, an infinitely better composition and one for which Argerich has an obvious affinity. It is demonic, furious, and supercharged, lending itself to Argerich's extremism. A certain pugilistic quality—abhorrent in most music—is desirable in Prokofiev, and Argerich all but sics herself on the score, tearing through its jagged and delirious passages. She is appropriately cool and severe in the second movement, and the Allegro is positively dizzying: It is marked *ma non troppo*—"but not too much"—but for Argerich, there is hardly ever any *troppo*, and, for once, she pulls it off.

Now long past her days as a *Wunderkind*—"See the Pretty, Wild-haired, South American Girl Play Like a Fiend!"—Argerich has a world of repertory before her, and she should explore it. There is nothing beyond her technically, as she demonstrates in, for example, the Rachmaninoff D-minor concerto (the work that received quite a run thanks to the movie *Shine*). But she should aim for a more thorough musicianship, trusting that she will always be able to wow a crowd. For all of her infuriating peculiarities, she is too gifted to remain a mere cult figure. Michelangeli is a fitting model: He, too, was no lamb, but he was a splendid colorist and a complete pianist. Argerich is unquestionably a marvel. But she should discard her more obnoxious habits and resolve at last to be great—that is, truly and forever great. ♦

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